

# A Historical Outline of the Subjunctive Mood in English

*With Special Reference to the Mandative  
Subjunctive*

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*‘Damn the subjunctive! It puts all our writers to shame.’*

Mark Twain



# **1 Introduction**

In this thesis I will try to present a historical outline of the subjunctive mood in English. That will include a description of the subjunctive, its historical perspective and usage in Old English, Middle English and Present Day English. It has been attested that the use of the subjunctive in OE and ME was inflectional, though changes had started to take place during the Middle English Period. One of the aims of this thesis is to lay emphasis on the factors which led to the decline of the inflectional subjunctive. Also, basing the description of the subjunctive on my own corpus investigation I will try to point out the differences that exist among the two major national varieties, that is, BrE and AmE. Also, I have included cases of mandative constructions used as alternatives to the mandative subjunctive in these two national varieties. By retrieving and analysing data from the BNC and COCA I will attempt to determine patterns of distribution of various mandative constructions. The primary aim of the corpus investigation is to determine whether suasive verbs favour mandative subjunctives more highly than impersonal adjectives and whether suasive impersonal adjectives generally favour indicatives more highly than verbs both in British English and American English.

## **1.1 Material and Method**

The material used in this thesis has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Both a diachronic and synchronic approach has been adopted.

In this master's thesis I have also used material from the two following corpora: the BNC and COCA. The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100-million word text corpus of samples of both written and spoken English. This corpus covers late British English of the 20th century from a large variety of genres.

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) consists of more than 450 million words spanning more than two decades. The words are equally divided among spoken language, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers and academic texts. The corpus covers the years between 1990 and 2011. It is regularly updated every six to nine months and serves as an important record of linguistic changes in American English.

The BNC and COCA, which contain language from specified text categories, are interrogated to ascertain the distribution of the subjunctive and other mandative constructions as well as the number of occurrences and raw frequencies.

The two corpora have been searched for each mandative construction listed, and the data retrieved has been recorded, tabulated and analysed. The work with the corpora is presented in chapter six.

## **1.2 Historical perspectives**

The subjunctive in Modern English can be traced back to the reconstructed Proto-Indo European moods: the subjunctive and the optative, which were both closely interrelated. In Proto-Indo European, the subjunctive was used to express hypothetical events and situations which were non-factual; wishes and hopes were expressed by the optative.

The Old English subjunctive expressed non-factuality, too, and according to Need and Schiller (1990: 323-5) it could be described as morphologically rich. However, as a result of long linguistic processes the subjunctive paradigm was reduced to a point where forms indistinguishable from the indicative began to appear. Gradually, Middle English pre-modals took on the full form of modal auxiliaries, thus facilitating the potential avoidance of indicative and subjunctive ambiguity. This development helped modality to be specified more effectively. As a result, subjunctive usage decreases significantly in Middle English, but witnesses a revival in the early stages of Modern English only to be followed by a further renewed decrease, at a slower pace.

According to Övergaard (1995: 37), ‘the development of a syntactic pattern is not always unidirectional.’ The ‘revival’ of the mandative subjunctive in American English during the 20th century is certainly a case in point.

## **1.3 Approaches to the subjunctive**

The subjunctive is without a shadow of a doubt a fairly marginal and highly controversial topic of English grammar, and opinions on it are, to this day, quite varied. The subjunctive was very common in Old English and Middle English, but it is generally assumed that it started to lose its importance in the Middle English period. In fact, the most profound changes

occurred during both Old English and Middle English. In spite of the general belief that the subjunctive underwent a so-called revival in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in American English, it appears that the subjunctive has not changed significantly since the beginning of Early Modern English.

Various grammarians and scholars have expressed their views on the subjunctive and most of the time disagreement has prevailed. Let us consider some of them.

There has been some school mastering of the language. The substitution of you were for you was in the singular occurs about 1820, and it is I is now often considered a social test where propriety is expected. What was left of the subjunctive mood in occasional use has disappeared except in conditions contrary to fact (if I were you) (Baugh 1935: 409).

Like the term imperative, the term subjunctive refers to a particular verb form. In Old English, special verb forms existed to communicate non-facts, e.g., wants, hopes, and hypothetical situations. The subjunctive is somewhat weak in Modern English, but there are speakers who use it routinely. In many cases, the subjunctive is a form learned in school or through reading, so it is educated speakers who use it most. The modern subjunctive expresses a variety of deontic meanings (Berk 1999:149-150).

About the subjunctive, so delimited, the important general facts are: (1) that it is moribund except in a few easily specified uses; (2) that, owing to the capricious influence of the much analysed classical upon the less studied native moods, it probably never would have been possible to draw up a satisfactory table of the English subjunctive uses; (3) that assuredly no-one will ever find it possible or worthwhile now that the subjunctive is dying; (4) that subjunctives met with today, outside the few truly living uses, are either deliberate revivals by poets for legitimate enough archaic effect, or antiquated survivals as in pretentious journalism, infecting their context with dullness, or new arrivals possible only in an age to which the grammar of the subjunctive is not natural but artificial (Fowler 1926:574).

While the number of tenses has been increased, the number of moods has tended to diminish, the subjunctive having now very little vital power left. Most of its forms have become indistinguishable from those of the indicative, but the loss is not a serious one, for the thought is just as clearly expressed in if he died, where died may be either indicative or subjunctive, as in if he were dead, where the verb has a distinctly subjunctive form (Jespersen 1905: 205).

The picture was not different in the 19<sup>th</sup> century either. Goold Brown (1851: 33) maintained, 'It would, perhaps, be better to abolish the use of the subjunctive entirely'. Another grammarian, Henry Sweet (1898: 109) also noted that the subjunctive is 'rapidly falling into

disuse – except, of course, in those constructions where it is obligatory in the spoken language’.

According to George Perkins Marsh (1860), ‘The subjunctive is evidently passing out of use, and there is good reason to suppose that it will soon become obsolete altogether.’ (quoted in Chalker and Weiner 1994:381)

Notable writers such as Somerset Maugham and Mark Twain have also had their say in this regard. According to Maugham (1941: 257) the subjunctive is more common among American writers than British writers but then again he observes that ‘they are kicking against the pricks; the subjunctive mood is in its death throes, and the best thing to do is to put it out of its misery as soon as possible’. Similarly, Mark Twain uses strong language when he refers to the subjunctive in *Notebooks*, published in 1935. ‘Damn the subjunctive! It puts all our writers to shame,’ he remarks.

Lamberts (1972: 236) says among other things that, ‘we may assume that the subjunctive expressed by the inflectional system of the verb is for all normal purposes dead. Except for a few set expressions, it has been replaced by the system of auxiliaries.’

Tottie (2002: 163) notes that ‘[t]he subjunctive is still very much alive in some European languages, but in English its use is extremely restricted. Apart from formulaic uses like, *God save the Queen*, *God bless you*, *Long live the King*, *Heaven help us*, et cetera, and a few constructions with *were*, as in *I wish I were rich*, *If I were you*, the subjunctive almost seemed to be disappearing.’

Tottie (2002: 163) also touches upon the mandative subjunctive and argues that ‘[t]he mandative subjunctive only became frequent in American English in the course of the twentieth century. It is now on the increase in British English as well.’

Quirk *et al.* (1985: 155) have found that there are indications that the subjunctive is re-establishing itself in British English, probably due to the influence of American English. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that the subjunctive and especially the mandative subjunctive is more characteristic of American English than of British English, where it is formal and somewhat legalistic in style. ‘The subjunctive in modern English is generally an optional and stylistically somewhat marked variant of other constructions, but it is not so unimportant as is sometimes suggested.’

On the other hand, other grammarians have referred recently to the revival of the subjunctive, especially in American English. Charles Finney (2000) expresses the view that ‘the subjunctive mood is a beautiful and valuable component of the English language, and instead of dying out, it is actually enjoying a subtle revival’ (Finney 1999-2000). In order to support his view, he collected 160 examples from various registers between 1996 and 2000 and provided evidence from feature films, documentaries, newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes. Let us go through some of his examples:

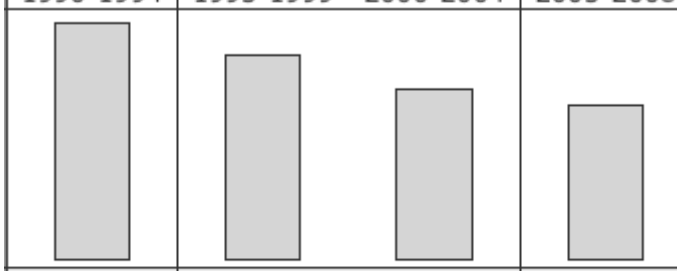
Conversations: It is important that he *tell* the truth now, lest he *be doubted* later. (19.10.1999)

Radio and television: It is imperative that everyone *play* pianissimo during the spoken monologue. (From the series *Frasier*, US television, 13.4.2000).

Newspaper: She said company lawyers also have demanded the Web site *be transferred* to their authority. Associated Press, printed in ‘The News Sentinel’ (Knoxville, Tennessee), p.4 (21.11.1999).

In sharp contrast to Finney’s view on the subjunctive, English (2009) has pointed out that Finney’s view is erroneous as ‘you cannot show a revival by looking at a single point in time.’ In order to prove his point he examined the occurrence of the subjunctive in the Corpus of Contemporary American English. It goes without saying that the COCA corpus provides quite reliable data for the usage of the subjunctive as well. Let us consider for a moment the diagram that English came up with, showing a significant drop in the usage of the subjunctive in the last two decades:






Table 1 The occurrence of the subjunctive in COCA

1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2008
			
<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>
103.4 565	103.0 491	102.6 404	77.9 277

Based on the evidence of this chart, it appears that the subjunctive is in decline in American English as well.

The common view is that the subjunctive is characteristic of mainly formal and legalistic styles, but English's finding challenges this view. The following chart, compiled by him, shows that spoken English has the highest frequency of the subjunctive while academic writing follows closely behind.

Table 2 The subjunctive accorss specified text categories in COCA

SECTION	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC
SEE ALL SECTIONS					
PER MIL	5.8	3.1	3.8	4.4	5.3
SIZE (MW)	78.8	74.9	80.7	76.3	76.2
FREQ	454	235	304	338	406

On the basis of the contradictory evidence with regard to the status of the subjunctive in English, the question that arises at this stage is whether the subjunctive is dying or reviving. Whatever the answer, it certainly survives and in one area of usage, that of the mandative subjunctive, it seems to be on the increase. Apart from various fixed phrases like, *So be it*, *Long live the Queen*, *Perish the thought*, *Come hell and high water*, the subjunctive of Present-Day English is basically restricted to various kinds of subordinate clauses, that is to say, mandative clauses and clauses of negative purpose (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 155-158 and Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 993).

The status of the subjunctive can be challenged probably because Modern English, unlike French or Italian, has few distinct verb forms that differentiate subjunctive from indicative. By tradition, the uses of ordinary indicative tenses to express hypothesis et cetera, like for instance, the use of a past tense to refer to a present or future condition, have been described as examples of subjunctive mood. The reason for that might be perhaps the fact that, in translation, such a usage might need a subjunctive equivalent form in another language. A case in point is the following example:

- (1) If you *came* tomorrow and not too late, I would pick you up in person from the airport.

It is obvious from the above example that though *came* is in the past tense, it refers to a future moment.

## 1.4 A few words on the subjunctive

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English*, the term subjunctive can be used as a noun and as an adjective. The definition of the noun is: 'the form (or mood) of a verb that expresses wishes, possibility or uncertainty.' The subjunctive denotes an action or state as conceived, but not as fact and, therefore, it communicates a degree of subjectivity, conveying the speaker's uncertainty about the reality of an event. In the collocation subjunctive mood, the term subjunctive is used as an adjective. But why was it named subjunctive? The subjunctive was so named because it was regarded as specially appropriate to 'subjoined' or subordinate clause.

Modern grammar restricts the use of the term subjunctive only to two distinct tenses, the present subjunctive and past subjunctive.

The Present Subjunctive is a finite verb form identical with the base form of the verb. Formally, it is exactly the same as the present indicative tense except for the third person singular which lacks *-s*, and in the verb *be*, where the subjunctive is *be* and not *is*, *am* or *are*. Present subjunctives have 'no concord with the subject, no backshifting of tense depending on the superordinate verb, and no do-periphrasis in negative constructions' (Johansson & Norheim 1988: 27)

Functionally, the present subjunctive can be used to refer to both the present and the past and it is used in three distinct ways:

- *The mandative subjunctive* is used in subordinate clauses following an expression of command, suggestion, possibility, recommendation, request, proposal, resolution intention, et cetera.

(2) I recommend he *try* harder to succeed.

Allegedly, this type of subjunctive has made a considerable comeback in British English in recent years probably under American influence.

- Rather formally, the present subjunctive can also be used in subordinate clauses of condition and concession, but not with past reference:

- (3) If that *be* the case, there is nothing we can do about it.  
 (4) (Even) if that *be* the official view, it cannot be taken for granted.

- The *formulaic* or *optative subjunctive* is used in independent clauses, mainly in set expressions or exclamations to express a wish or hope, very often involving supernatural powers:

- (5) (God) *bless* you! *Curse* this fog! Heaven *forbid* that!

The Past Subjunctive consists of the word *were*, used as the ‘past’ tense of the verb *be* for all persons.

The so-called *past subjunctive* is also referred to as the *were*-subjunctive or *the irrealis were* and it is used in clauses of hypothetical condition. The only difference between the *were*-subjunctive and the past indicative of *be* is in the first and the third person singular. The past subjunctive is often replaced by the past indicative. This phenomenon is popular among native speakers too. The reference is to present or future time:

- (6) If only my sister *were* here today! (If only my sister *was* here today!)

## 1.5 Alternatives to the subjunctive

In subordinate *that*-clauses the use of the subjunctive is not always compulsory. There are two major variants of the subjunctive verb phrase: the periphrastic alternative and the indicative one.

### 1.5.1 Periphrastic alternatives

Periphrastic alternatives to the subjunctive always entail the use of a modal auxiliary in a specialized modal-construction (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 994). In such cases, individual modals acquire a specialized meaning which is distinct from their role in main clauses:

- (7) It is vital that he *should put* more effort into his work.

It should be noted that subjunctives and modals are not always semantically equivalent in such contexts; the modals, very often, allow for nuances in meaning that cannot always be



communicated through the single subjunctive form. On the basis of the semantic, but not syntactic classification, periphrastic alternatives can be included in the subjunctive category.

### 1.5.2 The indicative

In some varieties of English, especially in British English, the indicative is a perfectly acceptable alternative to the subjunctive. Övergaard (1995: 61) notes that the indicative is not admissible in American English after suasive verbs, nouns and adjectives.

- (8) She has a temper tantrum when I insist that she *obeys* me. (BNC, search for *insist that she*)

### 1.5.3 To-infinitives

The finite *that*-clause is by far the most favoured structure that follows suasive verbs. The *to*-infinitive clause can also follow suasive verbs, especially after items such as, *ask*, *advise* and *direct*. Haegeman (1986: 69) points out that any suasive expression that takes the subjunctive can also be followed by a *to*-infinitive clause, although some triggers accept it more easily than others.

## 2 Mood in Old English

### 2.1 Introduction

Old English has three verb *moods*: *the indicative*, *subjunctive*, and *imperative*. These three moods are found in modern English as well. The only difference lies in the fact that *the subjunctive* in modern English is very limited in scope and range.

The distinction between the indicative, the subjunctive and the imperative is very clearly illustrated by Jespersen, who defines the indicative as a fact-mood, the subjunctive as a thought-mood, and the imperative as a will-mood (Jespersen 1924: 313).

It should be noted also that according to Visser (1955: 205-208), ‘The indicative represents modally non-marked activity, the subjunctive and imperative represent activity which is modally marked.’

*The indicative mood* is, by far, the most common used. To a great extent, it is used for situations when facts and reality, as opposed to guesses, wishes, or even imagined situations, are the content of a sentence or clause.

The subjunctive mood generally signals that the action or state specified by the verb is the object of a wish, a hope, or a fear, a command or request, a conjecture, belief or hypothesis, or is for some other reason unreal. (McGillivray 2011: 52)

It is important to emphasise here that *the subjunctive* cannot usually be the mood of the verb of a main clause except in the case of sentences expressing a wish amounting to a command. In the following examples, number 9 expresses a *wish*, number 10 expresses a *belief* and number 11 expresses a *conjecture*:

- (9) *Ic wolde ðætte hīe ealneġ æt ðære stōwe wāren.*

(I prefer that they always *be* at that place.)

- (10) *Ic ġelīefe ðæt ðū wille.*

(I believe that you want to.)

- (11) *Ic wēne ꝥætte noht moniġe beġiondan Humbre nāren.*

(I guess that there *may not have been* many beyond the Humber.)

The imperative mood is basically used for direct commands:

- (12) *Ġecnāwāþ þæt sōð is!*  
(Recognize what is true!)

## 2.2 Weak or regular verbs

A very large class of verbs in Old English is that of weak verbs. They are all conjugated in the same way with only a few variations. The main characteristic of these verbs is that they form their past (preterite) tense by adding a suffix containing a *-d*. It can be said that they are none other than the ancestors of the regular verbs of modern English, which form their past tense by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the base form. A very good representative of this class of verbs in Old English is the verb *lufian* ‘to love’.

The following table shows the verb *lufian* ‘to love’ conjugated in *the indicative*, *subjunctive* and *the imperative* moods.

Table 3 *Lufan* 'To love'

<b>Indicative</b>					
Present	Singular	Plural	Preterite	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person	<i>lufie</i>	<i>lufiaþ</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person	<i>lufode</i>	<i>lufodon</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	<i>lufast</i>	<i>lufiaþ</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	<i>lufodeſt</i>	<i>lufodon</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	<i>lufaþ</i>	<i>lufiaþ</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	<i>lufode</i>	<i>lufodon</i>
<b>Subjunctive</b>					
Present	Singular	Plural	Preterite	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person	<i>lufie</i>	<i>lufien</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person	<i>lufode</i>	<i>lufode</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	<i>lufie</i>	<i>lufien</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	<i>lufode</i>	<i>lufode</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	<i>lufie</i>	<i>lufien</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	<i>lufode</i>	<i>lufode</i>
<b>Infinitive</b>	<i>lufa, lufiaþ</i>				
<b>Present participle</b>	<i>lufiende</i>				
<b>Past participle</b>	<i>(ġe)lufod</i>				

## 2.3 Irregular verbs

It might be interesting to take a look at the following verb paradigms of *bēon* (*to be*) and *habban* (*to have*) and compare them to the verb paradigms of *lufian* (*to love*) or any other strong or weak verb paradigms. One can easily notice that there are points at which the

subjunctive of these verbs is distinct from the indicative, but there are also places where the subjunctive is identical to the indicative.

Table 4 *Bēon* ‘To Be’

<b>Subjunctive</b>		
	Singular (all persons)	Plural (all persons)
Present	<i>sīe, bēo</i>	<i>sīen, bēon</i>
Preterite	<i>wære</i>	<i>wæren</i>
<b>Present participle</b>	<i>wesende</i>	
<b>Past participle</b>	<i>(ġe)bēon</i>	

Table 5 *Habban* ‘To Have’

<b>Subjunctive</b>		
	Singular (all persons)	Plural (all persons)
Present	<i>hæbbe</i>	<i>hæbben</i>
Preterite	<i>hæfde</i>	<i>hæfden</i>
<b>Present participle</b>	<i>hæbbende</i>	
<b>Past participle</b>	<i>(ġe)hæfd</i>	

## 2.4 Strong verbs and weak verbs in Old English

For more than a thousand years, a process of erosion has been going on within the verb system of English. In spite of that, most of the strong verbs continue to maintain a formal distinction between the present, the preterite, and the past participle. This is a fundamental characteristic. On the other hand, weak verbs never distinguish between the preterite and the past participle.

Many grammar books talk about the principal parts of verbs, which refer to and identify the specific forms that the individual verb inflections may take. Regular verbs are completely predictable, so it is pointless to identify principal parts. Besides, one can discern certain regular patterns among the irregularities of the weak verbs and therefore the problems concern the degree to which these verbs may or may not be regularized.

One can also come across classes of patterns in the case of the strong verbs, and some of them are quite extensive. As a result, we must learn them virtually by heart, one by one.

It is worth pointing out that the principal parts of the English strong verbs derive directly from Old English. Just like in modern English they were functioning features of the verb system. The only difference lies in the fact that the verb in Old English incorporated a fourth principal part. Some relics of that fourth principal part are to be found even today, especially in non-literate speech. The four principal parts are as follows:

1. The base form was the first principal part, exactly as it is in Present-day English. Let us take as an example the verb *singan* ‘to sing,’ where the *-an* was the infinitive suffix and *sing-* the base. Many of the other inflections, that is, those for the present indicative, present subjunctive, and present participle were also constructed on this base.
2. The second principal part corresponded to the preterite *sang* in Present-Day English. It occurred only in the first and the third person forms of the preterite indicative, that is, only in *I sang* and *he sang*. A lot has changed since then, for example, the *-eth* in the third person singular and the *-end* of the present participle, which in turn have been replaced by *-(e)s* and *-ing*, respectively.
3. The third principal part *sungon* had the base *sung-*. It was around this base that the preterite indicative plural, the second person singular preterite indicative, and the preterite subjunctive were constructed. Today, this may seem needlessly complex and complicated. According to Lamberts (1972: 200), ‘a distinction between singular and plural forms continued until fairly recently, although sporadically.’
4. The fourth principal part consisted of the past participle *sungen*. In most of the cases the preterite plural and the past participle had the same vowel in the base. As for the verb *sing*, the past participle has come down to the present as *sung*. Lamberts (1972: 200) argues that, ‘...the *-en* ending was lost in the sixteenth century.’ In some strong verbs like, *written*, *taken*, *spoken*, *given*, et cetera, the *-en* inflection has been preserved.

All in all there were seven ‘classes’ of strong verbs in Old English. Each of them had a distinctive arrangement of vowels of the verb base which can still be seen in *strive*, *strove* *striven*. The strong verbs of Old English went through a long process of change. Many fell out of use, which is why today we do not have words like *shude* ‘to run’, *slithe* ‘to injure’, or *slup* ‘to slip’. Many other strong verbs crossed over into the weak verb pattern. The verb *shave*, for example, was conjugated like *take* and *shake*.

The most far-reaching and important change was the consequence of analogy with the weak verb conjugation. The typical strong verb has three parts, like, *take, took, taken*. Here the preterite and the past participle are clearly differentiated. In the case of weak verbs, the present and the preterite are distinguished, but not the preterite and the past participle, so the principal parts are *walk, walked*. The loss of the past participial inflection by analogy with the weak verbs, are the reasons why a number of strong verbs have been brought into the two-part pattern: *find - found; strike - struck; sting - stung*. As far as clarity is concerned, it is quite obvious that the distinctive past participle is completely redundant.

According to (Lamberts 1972: 201), ‘The pressure towards regularity is relentless and strong, backed by the entire weak system and much of the strong’.

In Latin, the ideas of obligation, necessity, contingency, permission, ability and desire were expressed by verb inflections, all of which were identified as *subjunctive*. The *subjunctive* is still expressed by inflectional forms in all Latin languages. In English and in the other Germanic languages as well, most of this work is carried out by a number of auxiliaries which are called *modals*. They are called so because they express grammatical *mode*, or, in other words *mood*.

It might be interesting to point out here that, at a stage in the history of the language, right before the emergence of English as an individual language, a fully inflected subjunctive mood operated in the Germanic languages.

According to Lamberts (1972: 235),

In Wulfila’s translation of the Bible into Gothic of the fourth century – there was already some use of the words in an auxiliary function. Four or five centuries later, in Old English itself, the number of auxiliaries had considerably increased and writers had the option of using a subjunctive inflectional form or a modal auxiliary. By the end of the Old English period the remnants of the inflected subjunctive virtually disappeared and the system of auxiliaries assumed the modal function.

## **2.5 The subjunctive in Old English**

‘By Old English we mean the language of the Germanic inhabitants of England, from their earliest settlement in that country, till about the middle or end of the eleventh century’ (Sievers 1968: 1).

The subjunctive was very common in Old English. OE had a rich inflectional system, which means that verbs were inflected not only for person, number and tense but also mood. As in all Germanic languages there were only two tenses, present and past. There were three moods in OE, the indicative, the subjunctive and the imperative. The basic use of the subjunctive was to express modal meanings. According to Traugott (1992: 184), ‘the subjunctive was used to cast some doubt on the truth of the proposition or to express unreality, potentiality, exhortation, wishes, desires, requests, commands, prohibitions, obligation, hypotheses and conjectures.’

In Old English *the subjunctive* is used: (1) with mental verbs, such as *þencan* and *þyncan*; (2) with verbs of ordering and requesting, such as *bebeodan*, *batan* ‘order, bid’; (3) verbs and adjectives of being appropriate, such as *gedafenian* ‘be fitting’, *gebyrian* ‘behoove’, *selost beon* ‘be best’ and other predicate adjectives with *BE*, such as *dyslic beon* ‘be foolish’:

- (13) *Hit gedafenað þæt alleluia sy gesungen.*  
 (It is fitting that Alleluiah *be* sung. It is fitting that Alleluiah *should be* sung.)  
 (Kovács 2010: 61)
- (14) *dyslic bið þæt hwa woruldlice speda forhogie for manna herunge of-men praise*  
 (It is foolish to despise wordly goods in order to win the praise of men.)  
 (Kovács 2010: passim)

*The subjunctive* is used in Old English in cases when the reporter wishes to avoid commitment to the truth of what is being uttered or even to doubt the truth of the utterance:

- (15) *Wulfstan sæde þæt he gefore (subjunctive) of Hæðum, þæt he wære (subjunctive) on Truso on syfan dagum & nihtum, ðæt þæt scip wæs (indicative) ealne weg yrnende under segle.*  
 (Wulfstan said that he went from Hedeby that he was in Druzno in seven days and nights, that that ship was all way running under sail.) (Fischer and van der Wurff 2006: 143)
- (16) *Forðy ic wolde ðætte hie ealneg æt ðære stowe wæren (subjunctive)*  
 (Therefore I wanted them always to be there.) (Kovács 2010: passim)

According to Fischer (1992: 314), ‘The subjunctive occurred regularly in reported speech without any implication of uncertainty on the part of the speaker.’

The following examples in (17), (18) and (19) illustrate the case when the subjunctive is used for reported speech:

- (17) *Hē cwæp þæt he būde on þāem lande norþweardum wiþ þā Westsæ.*

(He said that he *lived* in the land northward along the West Sea.)

- (18) *Hē sæde ðæt Norðmanna land wære swýþe lang.*

(He said that the land of the Northmen *was* very long.)

- (19) *Þā gyt hē frægn, hū nēah þære tide wære...*

(Again he asked, how near to the time it *was*...)

The subjunctive in OE is also used to express advice, wishes and commands:

- (20) *Gode ælmihtegum sīe ðonc.*

(Thanks *be* to God Almighty.)

- (21) *Hēo hine þā monade and lærde þæt he...munuchād onfenge.*

(She then admonished and advised him that he *receive* monkhood.)

- (22) *Mē ðyncð betre, gif iow swæ ðyncð, ðæt wē ēac sume bēc...wenden.*

(It seems better to me, if it seems so to you, that we also *translate* some books.)

- (23) *Ic nū lære þæt wē þā hraþe fyre forbærnen.*

(I now advise that we quickly *burn* them down with fire.)

Again in Old English, wherever the action is unrealized, the subjunctive is used. That is the case because it refers to a future time, a purpose, a conjecture, something avoided, or a hypothetical situation:

- (24) *Uncūð hū longe ðær swæ gelærede biscepas sīen.*

([It is] unknown how long bishops so learned *will be* there.)

- (25) *...ær ðæm ðe hit eall forhergod wære...*

(Before it was [to be] all destroyed by war.)

- (26) *Hē geband þā his sunu, and his sweord ātēah, þæt hē hine geoffrode.*

(He bound his son then, and picked up his sword, that he *might offer* him.)

- (27) *Ic wēne ðætte nōht monige begiondan Humbre nāren.*

(I expect that there *were not* many beyond the Humber.)

- (28) *Þy læs wulfas forswelgen hīe.*

(Lest wolves *swallow* them up.)



- (29) *Swelce hīe ewāden...*  
(As if they *said*...)
- (30) *Swylc swā þū æt swāsendum sitte mid þinum ealdormannum...*  
(As if you *were* to sit at the feast with your nobles...)

As noted by Traugott (1992: 185), *the hortative subjunctive* was used in all persons except for the first person singular:

- (31) *God us gerihtlæce.* (Kovács 2010: 61)  
(God us *correct*. May God *correct* us.)

The following example illustrates the case when a command or a wish was expressed by *uton + infinitive (let us)*:

- (32) *Ac uton we beon carfulle.* (Kovács 2010: 62)  
(But let us *be* careful).

Finally, in the following example the unambiguous form of the superlative *begeate* makes it likely that the mood is a subjunctive, which is the regular Old English idiom in a clause following a comparative or superlative adjective:

- (33) *Hreowa tornost þe leodfruman lange begeate.* (cautiously subjunctive)  
(The sorest grief that beset H. for years)
- (34) *Hreowa tornost þara þe hine lange begeaton.* (indicative)  
(The sorest of the griefs that had beset H. for years)

Again, according to Fischer (1992: 314), ‘The subjunctive occurs regularly in object clauses as well.’ For example:

- (35) *Ichulle þæt ze speken selde.*  
(I want that you speak seldom. ‘I want you to speak seldom’).

The subjunctive is widely used in clauses of result in Old English. Some scholars have referred to this type of subjunctive as *the consecutive subjunctive*, but here, the term *clauses of result* is used. Examples of subjunctive usage have been found in considerable numbers both in West Saxon poetry and prose works. The main characteristic of the subjunctive used in clauses of result is the fact that it is introduced by correlative particles.

[...] the majority of the writers on Germanic mood-syntax...adhere in the main to the Erdmann-Bernhardt theory, and hold that the chief factor in the use of the dependent consecutive subjunctive is to be found in the nature of the governing clause. ...to me personally, it seems likely that...the chief factor in the use of the consecutive subjunctive in these Germanic languages is to be found in the contingent nature of the dependent consecutive clause [...]  
(Callaway (1933: 67).

The following examples (36) – (53) have been taken from Callaway (1933: passim). Translations in Latin have been provided so that the construction types can be seen; verbs in the subjunctive are in bold.

a. The subjunctive introduced by non-prepositional particles:

With *swa swa* (*sua sua*), (*so as, so that*):

- (36) *He sceal tilian sua to libbanne sua he **mæge** þa adrugodan heortan **geþwænan** mid þæm flowendan yþon his lare.*

(Qui *sic* studet vivere, *ut* proximorum quoque corda arentia doctrinæ *valeat* fluentis irrigare.)

With *swa...þæs þe*, (*so...as, so...that*):

- (37) *Se me allum...aldormonnum Bretta þeode fornom & forhergade, swa efne þæs þe **meahte wipmeten beon**.*

(Qui...gentem uastauit Brettonum; *ita ut* Sauli...conparandus *uideretur*.)

*Meahte* may be interpreted as indicative too.

With *swa* (*swæ, sua*) *þæt*, (*so that*):

- (38) *Far mid him, **swa þæt** þu **do** þæt ic þe beode.*

(Uade cum eis: *ita duntaxat, ut* quod tibi præcepero, *facias*.)

With *swa* (*swa, sua*) *þætte*, (*so that*):

- (39) *God us drencte swiþe gemetlice mid tearum, swa þætte æghwelces mannes mod swa micle oftor **wære geþwæned** mid hreowsunge tearum swa swa he gemunde þæt hit oftor wære adrugod from Gode on his synnum.*

(‘Potum dedit nobis in lacrymis in mensura;’ *ut* videlicet...mens *tantum* pœnitendo compunctionis suæ *bibat* lacrymas, quantum se a deo meminit aruisse per culpas.)

With *swelc* (*swilc, swylc*) *þæt*, (*such that*):

- (40) *seo ripung...sy swylc, þæt hine ne **worian**...ne **lyste**.*

(Ad portam...ponatur senex sapiens,...*cujus* maturitas eum non *sinat* vagari.)

(At the door, an old man is supposed to ... a wise man, whose maturity keeps him from wandering.)

With *swelc* (*swilc*)...*þæt*, (*such...that*):

- (41) *Hwæt is nu ma ymbe þis to sprecenne, buton se se swelc ongieten sie þæt he þa cræftas **habbe** þe we ær bufan cwædon, þæt he þonne to foo.*

(Quid sequendum est, quid tenendum, nisi *ut* virtutibus *pollens* coactus ad regimen veniat, virtutibus vacuus nec coactus accedat?)

*swelc* (*swilc*)...*þætte*, (*such...that*):

- (42) *se þe hine upahefep on ofermetto swelcre unryhtwisnesse þætte he **fullfremme** hwelc yfel huru þurh geþeaht.*

(Qui *tanta* iniquitatis elation attollitur, *ut adimplere* malum etiam consilia conetur.)

(The great wave of violence rises to try to fulfill the evil counsels.)

With *to...**þæt*, (*too...that*):

- (43) *wæs an tid to læt þæt ic yfeldæda ær **gescomede** þenden gæst ond lic geador siþedan onsund on eared.*

(It was too late an hour when first I repented of my deeds of evil, while spirit and flesh journeyed on together unharmed.)

Kennedy, the author of *The Poems of Cynewulf Translated into English Prose*, is of the opinion that the above mentioned example is a temporal clause and not a clause of result.

In the *Lindisfarne Gospels* there are only a few examples of the subjunctive in clauses of result. For each use of the subjunctive there is a corresponding subjunctive in the Latin original text. It should be noted that the *Lindisfarne* translator makes good use of the indicative of result thus avoiding the subjunctive.

With *sua...**þæt*:

- (44) *hona forþon us in woestern hlafas sua monigo þæt we **gefylle** preat suæ michil*  
(*Matthew 15.33*)

(Unde ergo nobis in deserto panes *tantos ut saturemus* turbam tantam?)

*sua* (*suæ*) *þætte*:

- (45) *noht geondsuarede suæ þætte he **woere awundrad** se groefa.*

(nihil respondit *ita ut miraretur* pilatus.)

b. The subjunctive introduced by prepositional particles:

With *on þa wisan þæt*, (*in such wise that*):

- (46) *sy þeah seo leaf on þa wisan, þæt þær seo foresæde bot **fylige** and hine mid þæm eaþmodlice scyldigne **gesweotolige**.*

(nec præsumat sociari Choro psallentium usque ad satisfactionem, nisi forte Abbas licentiam dederit permissione sua; *ita tamen, ut satisfaciat* reus ex hoc.)

*on þa wisan...þæt* (*in such wise...that*):

- (47) *we þa geþafunga þæs drynces on þa wisan doþ, þæt þær næfre seo fyl...ne **weor þe**.*

(Saltem vel hoc consentiamus, ut non usque ad satietatem *bibamus*.)

(or, at least, agree with this, so as not to drink to satiety.)

With *to þæm (þæm) þæt*, (*to the extent that, so that*):

- (48) *To manienne sint þaþe hiera mildheortlice sellap þætte hie ne aþinden on hiora mode to þæm þæt hi hi **hæbban** (= **hebban**) ofer þa þe hie hiora sellap.*

(Admonendi sunt, qui jam sua misericorditer tribuunt, *ne cogitatione tumida super eos se quibus terrena largiuntur, extollant*.)

With *to þæm (þam)...þæt*, (*to the extent...that, so...that*)

- (49) *gif seo menigo to þam micel sy, þæt hy ne **mægen**.*

(*sin* autem multitude non *sinit*.)

(But if the number does not allow...).

With *to þæs...þæt*, (*to the extent...that, so...that*):

- (50) *sint to manigenne þæt hie gewisslice wieten þæt hie na on **to þæs** manegum goodum cræftum ne beoþ, **þæt** hie æfre **mægen** gæsplice **beon**, gif hie þurh ungemodnesse agiemeleasiap, þæt, et cetera.*

(Discordes namque admonendi sunt ut certissime sciant *quia* quantislibet virtutibus polleant, spiritales *fieri* nullatenus *possunt* si uniri per concordiam proximis negligunt.)

*to þon (þan) þæt*, (to the extent that, so that):

- (51) *Ongean þæt sint to manianne þa þe nabbab nawþer ne ildo ne wisdom to þon þæt hie **mægen** opþe **cunnen læran**.*

(At contra admonendi sunt quos a prædicationis officio vel imperfection vela etas *prohibet*, et cetera.)

With *to þon (þan) ...þæt*, (to the extent...that, so...that):

- (52) *Hwylc rihtgewittigra manna is to **þon snotor þæt** he **wylle** þa gastas **secgan** lichamlice?*

(Quis sanum sapiens esse spiritus corporeos *dixerit*?)

With *to þon þætte*, (to the extent that, so that):

- (53) *Ða wæs... gemeted seo þruh gerisenre lenge to gemete þæs lichoman, to þon þætte from dæle þæs heafdes eac swylce **meahte** wongerebetweoh **geseted beon**.*

(Inuentum est sarcophagum illud congruae longitudinis ad mensuram corporis, *adeo ut* a parte capitis etiam ceruical *posset interponi*.)

### 3 From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English

The debate about the origins of Middle English has continually engaged a large number of prominent scholars. Poussa, Bailey and Maroldt were among the first ones who introduced the term creole. Romaine (1984:465) wrote:

One need not get carried away with the similarities between the development of relativization in the post-creole continuum in Hawai and in Old English and thus conclude on the basis of such parallelisms that Old English (or Middle English) was a creole. It would be futile, in my opinion, to launch a debate about the prospect of uncovering creole origins for Old English and Middle English or, for that matter, proto-Germanic. [...] When referring to pidginization/creolization (and pidgins/creoles), we must be careful not to confuse the process with the entities which result from them. Hence the term creolization should be reserved for a situation in which a creole results. There are, however, cases where conditions are conducive to simplification, reduction, et cetera (for example, second language acquisition), but which do not give rise to a pidgin or creole.

Bailey and Maroldt talk about elements of creole in Old English and Middle English, but it must be pointed out that the term is often used vaguely by them. It appears that they have also idiosyncratically redefined the term in order to satisfy the specific needs of their arguments. The arguments they present appear contradictory while the data selective.

Görlach (1986: 329-344) argues that,

Unless simplification and language mixture are thought to be sufficient criteria for the definition of a creole or creoloid (and I don't think they are, since this would make most languages of the world creoles, and the term would consequently lose its distinctiveness), then Middle English does not appear to be a creole.

Görlach then turns his attention to the case of the Scandinavian dialects in the Danelaw area. On this subject he wrote:

What is found in the development of English between the 10th and 14th centuries can be explained as a reduction of redundancy inherent in the Old English system, but the geographical spread of innovative features illustrates that the special needs of communication in the Danelaw triggered off or speeded up changes in English that might otherwise have taken much longer to happen, (Görlach 1974/1982: 61-62).

According to Mitchell (1994: 163),

The question at issue, of course, is why the West-Saxon dialect of Old English – a Germanic language very similar to the ancestor of Modern German – was replaced by a descendant of the East Midland dialect, in the process becoming an SVO language dependent on prepositions and losing the inflections, the three Germanic element orders, and such things as the strong and weak declensions of the adjectives – features which are all retained in Modern German.

Mitchell himself adopts the traditional view according to which,

...a major factor was the Scandinavian invasions and the consequent establishment of bilingual communities of speakers of English and Scandinavian dialects – all Germanic in origin. As a result, the inflectional endings (which differed from dialect to dialect) were confused and reduced so that they were no longer distinctive. Such reduction was possible only because the Old English was already moving towards the SVO order... (Mitchell 1994: 164).

Burchfield (1985: 13) rejecting the notion of Scandinavian influence argues that

It is much likely that the linguistic changes of the period 900 to 1200 result from an increasing social acceptance of informal and unrecorded types of English. [...] These informal types of English emerged because of the instability of the Old English declensional system itself – it seems to have had too few clearly distinguishable case endings to bring out the necessary relationships between words. Moreover, lying at hand was a set of powerful but insufficiently exploited prepositions.

Taking into consideration the fact that the SVO order and prepositions were waiting in the wings or already on stage, it might be said that the traditional view mentioned above is the most likely and acceptable one.

### **3.1 The subjunctive in Middle English**

It must be stressed that already in OE not all endings were distinctive; for example, there was no distinction between the indicative and the subjunctive in the past tense of strong verbs in the second person singular. The same was true about the past tense of weak verbs in the first and third persons singular. A lot changed in English grammar during the Middle English period. According to Fischer (2006: 145), ‘Distinctiveness decreased further in ME, where all *-e*, *-on*, *-en* endings fell together under *-e*, thus obliterating many earlier differences between indicative and subjunctive forms.’

During the Middle English period, due to phonetic changes, a process of the levelling of inflectional endings took place. In late Old English, continuing a trend which had been present since the earlier Germanic stage, the distinct vowels in unstressed syllables became blurred towards schwa, /ə/. ‘The decay of inflections brought about a simplification of forms in the verb paradigm’ (Fischer 1992: 246-248). As a result, at least in some cases, it was no longer possible to distinguish between the various moods and tenses. To do that the language had to resort to other means. This brings the fixed word-order and the periphrastic constructions to the fore. Hence, the group of verbs known as ‘the preterite-presents’ grows in importance and develops into the modal auxiliaries which gradually start replacing the subjunctive. In Old English it was usual to employ adverbs, predicative phrases or verbal constructions to indicate epistemic modality. Gradually, the modals begin to play a larger role in later English. For instance, *magan* which used to express ability and later permission becomes an epistemic modal (Fischer 1992: 145). In spite of all these developments, it was still possible to distinguish between the subjunctive and the indicative in Middle English.

Already from OE onwards the subjunctive was losing importance for two reasons. Phonologically its forms were being reduced even faster than indicative inflections, and - perhaps in part as a consequence - syntactically its functions were being lost either to the indicative or to modal verbs (Denison 1998: 160).

As noted by Rissanen (1999: 228), ‘The loss of distinctive endings was probably the main reason for the replacement of the subjunctive forms by auxiliary periphrasis. This development was supported by the general trend towards analytic constructions in Middle English.’

### **3.2 The form of the subjunctive in Middle English**

As far as the form of the subjunctive in Middle English is concerned, one can distinguish between the inflectional subjunctive and the periphrastic subjunctive.

#### *Inflectional Subjunctive*

Now, the roots of the subjunctive in English go back to the Germanic subjunctive, which in form represents the Indo-European optative mood. ‘In the general decay of the inflectional endings which begins in Old English the formal differences between the indicative and the subjunctive are gradually lost or reduced to a minimum (Mustanoja 1960: 425). This process



starts originally in the north of the country and then gradually spreads throughout the country. The stem vowel of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular in the preterite indicative of strong verbs, for example, *band*, gets extended to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and plural, for instance, *bunde*, *bundon*. It is this indicative form which replaces the original subjunctive form *bunde*, *bunden*, with the result that the form *band* comes to represent the preterite subjunctive too. The development is brought to completion before the beginning of the ME period. In the Midlands, the levelling of the stem vowel occurs in the course of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries while in the south of the country the difference is retained until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, even in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular.

The only differences that still persist occur in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the preterite of *to be* (*was* – *were*). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular of the present tense the difference between the indicative (*-st*, *-s*) and the subjunctive (*-e*, later mute) is retained as long as the singular remains in use. Also, in the preterite indicative the *-st* (*-s*) ending is found in weak verbs and even this often disappears in the North (Mustanoja 1960: 452).

#### *Periphrastic Subjunctive*

During the OE period the subjunctive mood begins to be indicated periphrastically through modal auxiliaries like *sculan*, *willan*, *magan*, *motan*, *þurfan*, *uton*, *hatan*, and *durran*. It should be noted that *hatan* and *durran* are rarely found in a modal function. All the above mentioned auxiliaries were originally verbs with full meaning, but towards the end of the OE period and in ME they started being used as subjunctive equivalents and become increasingly common. Periphrastic expressions are by nature clearer in meaning and more emphatic than the old inflectional forms, in other words, they provide more effective means for indicating modality. In most cases, though, the original meaning of these modal auxiliaries is still clearly felt in the ME period

Some of the OE modal auxiliaries fall out of use in ME. At the same time, a considerable number of new verbs come into use in the role of subjunctive equivalents during this period. Wilde (1939: 207–389) mentions the following new verbs and phrases which are used for this function,

- (a) Equivalents of the volitional subjunctive in ME: *to be about to*, *to be holden to*, *beseem*, *bid*, *bir*, *cast*, *choose*, *covet*, *deign*, *enforce*, *grant*, *have to*, *have desire*

(*liking, need, will*), *have lever, it is to, keep, let, mon, purpose, shape, thole, wilne, yeme*.

(b) Equivalents of the non-volitional subjunctive: *could, deem, hold, seem, think, trow*.

It must be pointed out that, the greatest part of these new auxiliaries, are native verbs and not loan words from Latin.

Undoubtedly, some of the very best representatives of modal auxiliaries are the following ones: *shall, may*, and *will*.

The popularity of the modal periphrasis as a means of expression in ME is shown by the fact that in subordinate clauses the ratio between the periphrastic and inflectional subjunctive is virtually 9:1 in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.3 Tenses of the subjunctive in Middle English**

The only two tenses of the subjunctive in ME are the present and the preterite. The main distinction between these two tenses lies in modality, not in time reference, since both express modal relations within the time-sphere of the present/future. Interestingly, the preterite subjunctive is used to express modality also within the time sphere of the past, but with the development of the compound tenses this function is played by the pluperfect subjunctive. A later but very important characteristic of the subjunctive in ME, probably due to French influence, is the occasional use of the pluperfect subjunctive after the preterites of certain verbs expressing assumption, wish, fear and the like, when the activity assumed, desired or feared is hypothetical.

### **3.4 Uses of the subjunctive in Middle English**

#### **3.4.1 Subjunctive in main clauses**

In ME, the subjunctive continues to be used in independent and dependent clauses, in other words, the OE uses survive.

The inflectional present subjunctive is found mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular the subjunctive and imperative forms are alike and thus not always distinguishable from one another (Mustanoja 1960: 456).

With the exception of the example (55), the following ones, (54) – (111), are taken from Mustanoja (1960: passim):

- (54) *Rymenhild sede at furste, ‘Herte, nu þu berste, For Horn hastu na more’ (King Horn 1192).*

In independent clauses the present subjunctive is volitional and expresses a wish, exhortation, command or concession. The following example illustrates the subjunctive expressing a wish:

- (55) *God shilde that he deyde sodeynly! þatt mann þatt wile follÅhenn me/ & winnenn eche blisse,/ He take hiss rode, & here itt rihht.*  
(‘That man who wants to follow me and attain eternal bliss, let him take up his cross and bear it well’). (Kovács 2010: 64)

It must be noted that pious wishes of this type smoothly develop into exclamations and solemn statements. The subjunctive is also quite common in imprecations (curses):

- (56) *Wo worth that day that thow me bere on lyve (Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde iv 763).*

The subjunctive which expresses a wish is commonly found in prayers, too:

- (57) *Vader oure þet art ine hevenes, yhalzed by þi name; cominde þi riche; yworpe þi wil (The Ayenbite of Inwyt 262).*

The hortative subjunctive is commonly found in ME:

- (58) *þatt mann þatt wile follzhenn me Annd winnen eche blisse, He take his rode annd bere itt rihht (Ormulum 5608).*

In the case of the hortative subjunctive, a periphrastic construction with *let* may precede the subjunctive:

- (59) *Now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe And speke we of the Romayn Emperour (Chaucer, Canterbury Tales 953).*

The inflectional present subjunctive can also express concession:

- (60) *Ma dame, that can I do wel, Be so my lif therto wool laste* (Gower, *Confessio Amantis* i 187).

The inflectional preterite subjunctive is sometimes used to express a specific type of volition, that is, a wish which the speaker considers impossible:

- (61) *Allas for wo! Why nere I deed!* (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* 409)

However, in most cases the inflectional preterite subjunctive is used to express non-volitional verbal activity whose reality or realisability is conditioned by a hypothetical subordinate clause or which otherwise is subject to doubt:

- (62) *Betere were child unbore þan techingeles forlore* (*The Good Wife Taught her Daughter* 161).

Another characteristic feature of the subjunctive in ME is that the preterite subjunctive *would* is usually found in statements that express hesitation. This is more typical of a polite, deferential style.

- *would rather*

It should be borne in mind that the type *would rather* is first encountered in ME towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century:

- (63) *That rather deye I wolde* (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* iii 379, Mustanoja 1960: 457).  
(I would rather die)

- *I should rather*

This type emerges later, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century:

- (64) *I suld rather at on callyng renne to my makere* (*Gesta Romanorum* 427, Mustanoja 1960: 457).

- *I had rather*

It is again during the 15<sup>th</sup> century that *I had rather* appears on the scene:

- (65) *Yet haid I rather dye for fis sake ons agayne* (*Reliquiae Antiquiae* i 72).

- *I had lever*

*I had lever* turns up at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century:

- (66) *ȝuyt hadde ich leovere ich were ihuld* (*The South English Legendary*, lxvi 321).

- *me were lever*

In fact, *me were lever*, dates back from OE, but the following example is a ME one:

- (67) *me were lever a thousand fold to dye* (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* iii).

The following example illustrates a mixture of the impersonal and personal construction:

- (68) *for to have broke þat yche vowe* (Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne* 2837).

- *Periphrastic subjunctive*

The original independent meaning of the auxiliary verb adds some colour to the modality expressed by the periphrastic subjunctive. One might say that in many ways and in the majority of the cases the use of the periphrastic subjunctive in ME is rather similar to its use in Modern English. It must also be pointed out that modal periphrases are widely used in Middle English.

Another example of the present subjunctive follows:

- (69) *Shal no lewdnesse lette þe leode þat I lovyte, That he ne worth first avaunced* (*Piers Plowman* iii 32).

It might be worth mentioning that in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural the hortatory subjunctive, both in OE and ME, is expressed by means of *uton*, *ute* which derive from *wuton*. This continues until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century:

- (70) *Ute we þah to him fare* (*The Owl and the Nightingale* 1779).

In later Middle English a new feature emerges, *let* takes over *uton*, *ute*. Example (72), mentioned above, illustrates this case.

One can talk of a very special use of *would* in the context of the periphrastic preterite subjunctive. The meaning it expresses is *ought to be*:

- (71) *The gowne nedyth for to be had; and of coloure it wolde be a godely blew, or ellys a bryghte sanggweyn (Paston Letters 1440).*

### 3.4.2 Subjunctive in dependent clauses

#### (a) Subject clauses

A surbordinate clause which is introduced by *that* may acquire the function of the logical subject of an impersonal or personal statement. A subjunctive is always needed whenever the verbal activity in *that*-clauses has got a modal colouring, and especially in those cases when the speaker regards it not as a fact but as something which is desirable, probable, possible or proper:

- (72) *That is my conseil... þat uche man forgyve other (Piers Plowman, xix 391).*  
(73) *Now it is resound and tyme that I shewe yow (Chaucer, Canterbury Tales 391).*

#### (b) Object clauses

Object clauses are also introduced by *that*, although the conjunction itself is sometimes omitted. The subjunctive occurs after volitional expressions, that is, wishes, exhortations and commands:

- (74) *I wisshe þanne it were myne (Piers Plowman v 111).*

The subjunctive is also commonly used after requests and entreaties:

- (75) *We praye...þat god... ȝowre grayne multiplie (Piers Plowman v 111).*

It should be noted that the most common auxiliary is *schulde* (*should*); *mote* is occasionally used in early ME:

- (76) *Gladly hym bides þat his hert and his honed schulde hardi be boþe (Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle 371).*

The subjunctive is also used after expressions of advice:

- (77) *I rede thee that thou get A felowe that can wele concele And kepe thi counsel*  
(*The Romaunt of the Rose* 2856).

The subjunctive is also used after verbs which express mental activities like *believing*, *knowing*, *showing*, *thinking*, et cetera:

- (78) *For wende I nevere...That swich a monster...myghte be* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 1344).

The subjunctive in ME is also used after verbs expressing fear:

- (79) *sore hure dradde þat horn isterve were* (*King Horn* 1166).

### (c) Relative clauses

The use of the subjunctive in relative clauses is not uncommon in OE. In ME, with the possible exception of the very earliest part of the period and certain particularly conservative areas like Kent, relatively little remains of this usage (Mustanoja 1960:461)

The retention of the subjunctive is still visible in relative clauses subordinated to a hypothetical clause:

- (80) *fele of ȝow fareth as if I a forest hadde þat were more nedy þan he* (*Piers Plowman* xv 326).

The use of the subjunctive is quite natural in clauses introduced by relative pronouns. In such clauses an element of concession is implied:

- (81) *I reche nat whatwrong that thou me profre* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 489).

Also, the subjunctive may be naturally used when the main clause expresses volition, that is, exhortation, order or command:

- (82) *Rewe on þis robbere þat reddere ne have* (*Piers Plowman* 475).

Another case when the subjunctive occurs is when a negative main clause is accompanied by an affirmative relative clause:

- (83) *Mannes son hath not where he reste his hed* (Wyclif, *The Holy Bible*, *Matt.viii*).

It is important to point out here that whenever the main clause and the relative clause are both negative, then the indicative is used instead of the subjunctive. However, if the relative clause is part of a comparison, then the subjunctive is used:

- (84) *Ypocrysie in latyn is lykned to a donghul þat were bysnewed with snowe...or to a wal þat were whitlymed and were foule withinne (Piers Plowman xv 109).*

(d) Clauses of place

The use of the subjunctive in locative clauses is very rare, but it occurs under very specific conditions. One such typical example is the use of *wher* with an obvious concessive colour instead of wherever:

- (85) *Wyf, go wher thee liste (Chaucer, Canterbury Tales 318).*

For the reason mentioned above, the subjunctive is quite frequently used with *wher-so*, *wher-so-ever*, *whider-so*, and the like:

- (86) *I wol the serve Right as this clave, whider so thou wende (Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde iii 391).*

(e) Clauses of time

As a rule, the subjunctive is used to refer to an action that is perceived as possible, probable or even conjectural. According to this principle, the subjunctive is mostly used in statements, and always in the present tense, whenever the temporal clause is introduced by *till*:

- (87) *Cesse shal we nevere, Til mede be þi wedded wyf (Piers Plowman ii 152).*

It is worth mentioning that both in Chaucer's poetry and prose, for a statement in the present tense a subjunctive is used, whereas for statements made in the preterite, an indicative is used. There are rare instances, though, when the preterite subjunctive is used:

- (88) *Joly prentys with his maister hood. Til he were ny out of his prentishood (Chaucer, Canterbury Tales 4400).*

In clauses introduced by *ere*, (*ar*, *or*) 'before' the subjunctive is the more or less regular form in statements made in the present tense, both in early and late ME. In statements made in the preterite the early ME usage varies,



while in Chaucer, the indicative and subjunctive are equally common (Mustanoja 1960:463).

The following is an example of the subjunctive:

- (89) *So bifel that, longe er it were day, his man mette* (Chaucer, Canterbury Tales 4191).

In clauses of time introduced by *tho*, *when*, and *while* the indicative is the preferred choice, but if the temporal clause refers to a future event, then the subjunctive is used:

- (90) *Send him after none... Whane þe kyng arise to wude for to pleie* (King Horn 360).

(f) Clauses of comparison

- Inequality

Clauses of comparison expressing inequality are introduced by *than* or *than that*. In general, such clauses have the verb in the indicative mood, especially when they follow negative main clauses. The choice of the mood depends on geographical factors when the clause of comparison follows an affirmative principal clause. In Midland texts the indicative prevails, while in the southern parts of the country, mainly in Kent, the subjunctive is the preferred mood, at least with the present tense. This feature is preserved in Kent until the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century' (Mustanoja 1960: 464).

- (91) *More æie stent man of manne þanne hym do of Criste* (Poema Morale).

Chaucer usually uses the indicative except for those instances when the clause of comparison is introduced by *rather than* and the like. The reference is to the future, though:

- (92) *Rather than my felawe deye yet shal I Somwhat more unto hym seye* (Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde iv. 524).

- Equality

The choice of the indicative seems to be the norm for all comparative clauses of equality introduced by *as* and *so* whenever the comparison is perceived as real. There is one instance

in early ME when the subjunctive occurs in clauses of comparison with *so...so* most probably because the implication is that of the highest possible degree:

- (93) *Apulf sede on hire ire so stille so hit were* ('as quietly as might be') (*King Horn* 310).

Also, in solemn statements introduced by *as* or *so* the use of the subjunctive is required because of the volitional character of the expression which comes very close in meaning to that of a wish:

- (94) *as help me god and þe halydam* (*Sir Gwain and the Carl of Carlisle* 2123).

The preterite subjunctive is used after conjunctions which express a similar meaning to that of *as if*. The conjunctions which can be used in this function are the following: *so*, *right so*, *as*, *as though*. The two illustrations below are a case in point:

- (95) *he cride and knocked as that he were wood* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 3436).

#### (g) Clauses of result

Clauses of result make good use of both the indicative and the subjunctive in early ME. When the result is presented as a fact, without any implication of modality, the indicative is used and when some kind of modality is implied the subjunctive is used. When the result is directly associated with the negativity of the main clause, the subjunctive occurs:

- (96) *Wurþu nevere swo wod ne so drunken þat evere sai þu þi wif Al þat þi wille be* (*The Proverbs of Alfred* 283).

In later Middle English this usage is replaced by the periphrastic subjunctive:

- (97) *I wol my wo endure Ne make no contenance of hevynesse, that folk of yow may demen harm or gesse* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 1486).

The subjunctive is also used, both in early and late ME, when the action or state expressed by the dependent clause is the direct result of the wish or necessity expressed in the main clause:

- (98) *Ac do nouȝt out of resoun, That þow worth þe werse whan þow worche schuldest* (*Piers Plowman* 26).

Another very interesting case of the subjunctive being used in early ME is when the dependent clause of result is subordinated to another dependent clause:

- (99) *And yif this wey ledeth the ayein so that thou be brought hider, thane wiltow seye* (Chaucer, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* iv 1, 34).

The preterite subjunctive is also used quite naturally especially in those cases when the action expressed by the clause of result is impossible or unrealizable:

- (100) *Therto desir so brennyngly me assailleth That to ben slayn it were a gretter joie To me than kyng of Grece ben and Troye* (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* 608).

According to Mustanoja (1960:466),

The subjunctive loses ground considerably to the indicative in the course of the period. The loss of the inflectional subjunctive is counterbalanced by the use of periphrastic subjunctive equivalents, which – particularly in the case of *may* (*might*), *shall* (*should*) and *will* (*would*) – is quite extensive.

#### (h) Classes of purpose

‘Because a final clause (a clause of purpose), introduced by *that*, *so that*, *for*, *lest*, et cetera, expresses a prospective event or state, the use of the subjunctive is natural. The indicative, although it does occur is uncommon’ (Mustanoja 1960: 466).

In early ME periphrastic equivalents of the subjunctive are as widely used as the inflectional subjunctive. The most frequent auxiliaries used in clauses of purpose are *shall*, *may* (*mowe*) and *mote*. Characteristically, the inflectional subjunctive is used in the present tense, which holds true for the modal auxiliaries *may* and *mote*. The auxiliary *shall* (*should*) is usually used in the preterite, which coincidentally is the main domain of the periphrastic subjunctive. This situation continues to be so until late ME, where just like in early ME, the inflectional subjunctive is used alongside the periphrasis with *may* mainly in the present tense, whereas *shall* (*should*) emerges in the preterite. The modal *mote* is taken over by *will*, which more frequently appears in its preterite form, *would*.

In late ME there are only two auxiliaries left in clauses of purpose; they are *may* and *shall*:

- (101) *And, for his tale sholde seme the betre, Accordant to his words was his cheere*  
(Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 102).

(i) Clauses of concession

‘Concessive clauses, as a rule, are modally coloured, and the use of the subjunctive is therefore quite widespread. The most typical concessive clause is that introduced by *though*’ (Mustanoja 1960: 467).

- (102) *Beh ich beo a winter eald* (*Poema Morale* 181, Mustanoja 1960: 467).

The preterite subjunctive prevails in all the southern dialects, while in the Midlands it is only used to express unreality. In late ME, the subjunctive is the dominant choice even in instances where the concession refers to a fact. Around this time, the indicative begins to gain ground, especially in the preterite.

The following example illustrates the use of the concessive subjunctive:

- (103) *I was aferd of her face, þeiȝ she faire were* (*Piers Plowman* I 10, Mustanoja 1960: 468).

Concessive clauses in ME can also be introduced by *although* and occasionally by the plain *all*:

- (104) *I am a litel wroth With yow...although it be me looth* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, *The Shipman’s tale* 1574).

The phrase *al be it*, most likely introduced into English under the influence of the Old French *tout soit il*, is comparable to *although*:

- (105) *Al be it so the bodi deie* (Gower, *Confessio Amantis* iv 2393).

(j) Clauses of condition

The most common conjunction used to introduce clauses of condition is *if*; sometimes the conjunctions *and*, and *if, but if (unless)* are also used. Occasionally, no conjunctions are used at all; instead, inversion occurs (*had y wȝst*, et cetera). Clauses of condition with the verb in the subjunctive mood come up when the verb in the principal clause expresses wishes, exhortations or commands, but in the course of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries the subjunctive is

used even in those cases when the verb in the main clause is in the indicative mood. This is more typical of the northern dialects. Sometimes the choice of the mood is a question of the translator's taste as it becomes visible from the following examples:

- (106) *et se tu as si grant besoigne Que esloigner il te conviegne* (*The Romaunt of the Rose* 2711); (Old French text).
- (107) *and if such cause thou have that thee Bihoveth to gon out of contree* (*The Romaunt of the Rose* 2711); (translated ME text).

In example (106) the indicative is used in the Old French text, while in (107), the ME translated text uses the subjunctive.

Interestingly, there are cases when the subjunctive is used side by side with the indicative without any difference in modality:

- (108) *and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, thane shul ye kepe yow wisely from all swich peple* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales, The Prologue and Tale of Melibee* 2502).

The preterite subjunctive may be used instead of the present subjunctive if the conditional clause contains a purely hypothetical statement:

- (109) *and I were a pope...every mighty man Sholde have a wyf* (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* 3140).

Sometimes it is the use of rhyme that determines the choice of the subjunctive over the indicative:

- (110) *zif tueie men goþ to wraslinge, An eiþer oþer faste þringe* (*The Owl and the Nightingale* 796).

The subjunctive emerges also in non-introduced clauses of condition with inverted word-order:

- (111) *Men myzte wite where þei went* (*Piers Plowman* 165).

## 4 Mood in Modern English

### 4.1 Introduction

Mood (*L. modus*) in Modern English is very difficult to define, but it can simply be said that it is an indication of the speaker's attitude to what he or she is talking about, whether the event is considered fact (indicative) or non-fact (subjunctive). Non-fact includes a number of different degrees of reality, and includes wishes, desires, requests, warnings, prohibitions, commands, predictions, possibilities, and contrary-to-fact occurrences.

The first influential grammar books that gave some insight into the difficulties of the subjunctive appeared in the 18th century. The grammarians of that period expressed different views on the form and the use of the subjunctive in English. Even the category of mood itself seemed to be quite problematic. Besides the indicative, the imperative, the infinitive and the subjunctive, another mood was regarded as a separate mood. That was either the potential or the optative.

Ash (1760: 1775) believes that the subjunctive is a synonym for the potential mood. In contrast, Johnson (1755), Murray (1795) and Dilworth (1740) consider the potential and the subjunctive two distinct moods. Dilworth adds the optative while Lowth (1762) regards participles as a fifth mood. Bayly (1756) uses the terms subjunctive and optative entirely synonymously. Finally, Johnson uses the term conjunctive mood interchangeably with the subjunctive mood. What is certain is that the subjunctive in the 18th century was still somewhat of a puzzle and the grammarians were not sure of how to deal with it.

Table 6 The mood system of English in some 18th - century grammars (Kovács 2009:80)

Ash	1775	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.			Pot.
Murray	1795	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.	Subj.		Pot.
Dilworth	1751	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.	Subj.	Opt.	Pot.
Bayly	1758	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.	Subj.(Opt.)		
Johnson	1755	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.	Conj.		Pot.
Lowth	1762	Ind.	Imp.	Inf.	Subj.	Part.	

(Ind. = Indicative, Imp. = Imperative, Inf. = Infinitive, Subj. = Subjunctive, Opt. = Optative, Conj. = Conjunctive, Part. = Participle, Pot. = Potential)

Finite verb phrases in English have three moods: *Indicative*, *Imperative* and *Subjunctive*.

*The indicative* is the form of the verb that states a fact in declarative, interrogative and exclamatory sentences, whereas *the imperative* expresses direct commands. In modern English, the imperative mood has a special syntactic form: it is a sentence without a subject containing the bare infinitive, as in *Go away! Stop talking! Be quiet!*

- (112) *Enya sings beautifully.* (declarative)
- (113) *Do you play the piano?* (interrogative)
- (114) *It is not fair!* (exclamatory sentence)
- (115) *Keep off the grass!* (imperative)

It is important to point out that the imperative is always addressed to the second person *you*. There is another type of imperative with *let's* addressed to the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural, to oneself and to other people present. This type of imperative can be considered a kind of suggestion:

- (116) *Let's go to the pictures this evening!*

There is another imperative with *let* which is addressed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person:

- (117) *Let him make a choice for himself.*

There is a distinction between the 1<sup>st</sup> person with *let* and a true 2<sup>nd</sup> person command. Example (116) apart from a suggestion could also be typical language of children speaking to their parents.

*The subjunctive* may be described as the non-factual mood. It is chiefly used to express something that is hypothetical, but it may also express tentativeness, uncertainty or vagueness. According to the *Longman Guide to English Usage*, 'The subjunctives are forms of verbs that are primarily used to convey conditional relationships or to refer to situations that are desired or feared.'

- (118) *Far be it from me to stand in the way of true love.* (BNC, search for *far be it from me*)
- (119) *I wish I were brought up in a bilingual community.*

In Old English, the subjunctive was expressed by special inflected forms of the verb, but in present-day English, only some remnant forms of the subjunctive remain: these forms are identifiable by the lack of *-s* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the present tense. Historically speaking, the ending was an *-e*, but that was gradually lost. Other identifiable remnant forms of the subjunctive today are the use of *be* for all persons and numbers of the present tense and of course, of *were* for the past tense.

Examples of the remnant inflected subjunctives are found in main clauses which are highly formulaic: *God save the Queen, Have mercy on us, Far be it from me*, et cetera. At first glance, *God save the Queen*, might resemble a command, but it differs from a command in the sense that one cannot command God to do anything.

Remnant subjunctives in subordinate clauses are restricted to a few contexts:

1. *that*-clauses following :

- matrix verbs such as, *insist, suggest, demand, move, recommend, beg, ask, request*, et cetera:

(120) I *recommend* that he *apologize*.

- adjectives, such as, *desirable, essential, imperative, vital*, etcetera:

(121) It is *advisable* that he *apologize*.

- nouns, such as, *decision, requirement, request, recommendation*, et cetera:

(122) It is a *requirement* that he *apologize*.

Considering that the indicative would be *I recommend that he apologizes*, it can be said that the difference between the indicative and the subjunctive becomes visible only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular where there is no ending *-s* on the verb. The verbs *recommend* and *suggest* are probably the most productive verbs in Modern English with regard to the subjunctive usage, especially in American English.

Past subjunctive expressing a hypothetical or unreal condition:

2. *if*-clauses: *If I were rich..., as if he repented..., if only she were*, et cetera.
3. Clauses following verbs which express a wish: *I wish I were rich*.

It can be stressed here that the indicative seems to be gradually replacing the subjunctive here, which means that *If I was rich* is being used instead of *If I were rich*.



The other type of subjunctive which follows *lest*-, *though*-, or *whether*-clauses has almost become obsolete, but one can still encounter it in formal styles.

In Modern English, other modal forms containing modal auxiliaries or their phrasal equivalents have replaced the subjunctive, as in *He might leave*, *You shouldn't complain*, *Would you pass the pepper?*, *She ought to try harder*. Also, modal adverbs such as, *possibly*, *perhaps*, *maybe* as well as modal adjectives like *necessary*, *possible* or *probable* are used extensively. A colloquial but very common means of expressing the subjunctive is the use of first-person parentheticals, or the so-called comment clauses:

(123)     *You are absolutely in the right, I guess.*

## 4.2   The Subjunctive in Modern English

There are two forms of the subjunctive in Modern English: the present subjunctive and the past subjunctive. The two major categories of the present subjunctive are the *mandative* and the *formulaic subjunctive*. Using the traditional terms of the present subjunctive and the past subjunctive may be misleading, since the difference between the two forms is not primarily one of tense but of mood. It must also be noted that in present-day English subjunctive meanings are commonly expressed through the use of modal auxiliaries and other modal expressions. With most verbs, the present subjunctive is distinctive only in the third person singular where it lacks the *-s* and differs from the indicative forms *am*, *is*, *are*. It is here that its contrast with the indicative is evident. In all the other singular persons and in plurals the base form is exactly the same as the present tense form. What it all means then is that the subjunctive is recognizable only in the present tense and when the subject is third person singular. Consequently, when the subject of the clause is a plural subject, there is normally no difference between the indicative and subjunctive forms.

(124)     I recommend that we *cancel* the committee's decision. (indicative or subjunctive)

(125)     I recommend that the committee *cancel* the decision. (subjunctive)

(126)     I recommend that the committee's decision(s) *be cancelled*. (subjunctive)

(127)     I recommend that the committee's decision *should be cancelled*. (periphrastic construction with the modal *should* or *should-mandative* ).

Sometimes the term *modal subjunctive* can be used as there are many cases when the modal *would* is used instead of the modal *should*. The latter is the most common one.

The verb *to be* is the only verb which has distinctive subjunctive present tense forms for all persons both in the singular and the plural and the only verb which has a past tense subjunctive. The form, being *were* for all persons singular and plural, goes to show that the past subjunctive of *to be* becomes recognizable only in the first and third persons singular.

While the indicative form shows a contrast between *was* (first and third persons singular respectively) and *were* (second person singular and plural), the subjunctive is invariably *were*. Hence, it is a form distinct from the indicative only in the first and third persons singular:

(128) If he/she/ *was singing*, you would have certainly appreciated it. (indicative)

(129) If he/she *were singing*, you would have certainly appreciated it. (subjunctive)

One characteristic of the imperative verb phrase is that it allows few morphological or syntactic variations. The same can be true about the subjunctive verb phrase. Examining sentence (130) will show that a passive subjunctive is quite possible for the mandative subjunctive, as well as for the formulaic and *were*-subjunctive:

(130) The Lord *be* praised! (restricted use)

(131) It would be unacceptable if he *were criticized* for something he never did.

With the exception of *be* the verb phrase is turned into a negative by placing the negative particle *not* before the subjunctive form. In the case of *be*, the negative particle may be placed both before and after the verb, whereas in the case of *were* it follows:

(132) It is essential that she *not give up* hope. (subjunctive)

(133) It is essential that she *does not give up* hope. (indicative)

The contrast between (134) and (135) is very obvious in terms of the way their negatives are formed.

(134) The lawyer insisted that the prisoner *be not* allowed to see his relatives.

(135) The lawyer insisted that the prisoner *not be* allowed to see his relatives.

## 4.3 Uses of the subjunctive

### 4.3.1 The mandative subjunctive

‘The mandative subjunctive is a very distinct kind of directive and it always takes the same form’ Berk (1999: 149-150).

The mandative subjunctive is definitely the most common apart from the formulaic one. It occurs in subordinate *that*-clauses, and consists of the base form of the verb only. Thus the regular concord of the indicative mood between subject and finite verb is absent. Also, it is important to stress that there is no back-shifting of tense; that is, the present and past variants are formally indistinguishable:

- (136) Her sole requirement is/was that the team do their best.
- (137) Paul recommend(*ed*) *that* he go to graduate school.
- (138) All she demanded in return – my guess, of course – was that he *love* her or, at least, never *leave* her. (McEwan 2013:4)
- (139) A humorous *suggestion* was made that she *sing* the notes on her face, whereupon she threw up her hands, sank into a chair, and went off into a deep vinous sleep. (Scott-Fitzgerald 2000: 53)

According to Quirk (1985: 156),

The mandative subjunctive is productive in that it can be used with any verb in a *that*-clause, when the superordinate clause satisfies the requisite semantic condition, *viz* that the *that*-clause be introduced by an expression of demand, recommendation, proposal, resolution, intention, et cetera.

The expressions of will that govern these constructions may take the form of a verb, an adjective or a noun, which can also be called triggers.

- (140) *It is vital that* the Education Reform Bill *be approved*. [adj.]
- (141) A spokesman for the Knox family said that the 26-year old had never agreed to attend the re-trial and that there is no *requirement* she *be* there. [n.] (*Mail online* 2013, accessed 25.08.13)
- (142) The British embassy in Madrid has also made a formal diplomatic protest to Spain’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and *requested* that it *investigate* the incident.[v.] (*The Independent* 2013b, accessed 26.11.13)

The adjectives may be of two types: a. personal adjectives that take a personal subject, like for example, he was *determined/anxious/eager/adamant that*, et cetera; b. impersonal adjectives, as for instance, it is *vital /essential/appropriate important/necessary that*, et cetera. Some adjectives may correspond to a verb or noun that is used in a mandative construction, but most of them do not. One good example is the verb *advise*. The noun *advice* and the adjective *advisable* can be used in mandative constructions as well.

Also, many of the verbs and nouns may very well correspond in form and meaning, and often can be identical; on the other hand, some verbs have no corresponding noun in a mandative construction and vice versa.

The following table illustrates typical governing expressions in Mandative Constructions:

Table 7 Governing Expressions in Mandative Constructions

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Personal Adjective</b>	<b>Impersonal Adjective</b>
advise	advice	adamant	advisable
	ambition		
	anxiety	anxious	
	appeal		
			appropriate
ask			
beg			
			best
		concerned	
	condition		
decide	decision		
decree	decree		
demand	demand		
desire	desire	desirous	desirable
determination	determined		
dictate	dictate		
direct	direction/directive		
		eager	
			essential
			fitting
			imperative
			important

insist	insistence	insistent	
intend	intention		
mandate			
move	motion		
			necessary
order	order		
petition	petition		
prefer	preference		
propose	proposal		
recommend	recommendation		
request	request		
require	requirement		
resolve	resolution		
specify	specification		
stipulate	stipulation		
			sufficient
suggest	suggestion		
urge			urgent
			vital
vote	vote		
	wish		

Etymologically speaking, the term *mandative* is derived from the verb *mandate*, which itself comes from the Latin *mandare*: ‘to enjoin, command.’ It was Quirk et al. (1985: 156) who, for the first time, used the term *mandative subjunctive*. Then, (Algeo 1992: 599) introduced a modified version, that of the ‘mandative expressions.’ In this thesis, the term ‘mandative constructions,’ will be widely used. Also, instead of using the expression ‘periphrastic construction’ with the modal *should* (Övergaard, 1995; Hundt, 1998) to designate the construction with the modal, which is one variant of the mandative subjunctive, I will also use the terms *should mandative* and *modal mandative*.

The subjunctive can also be found in constructions which are governed by emotional or volitional adjectives.

It has been claimed that the mandative subjunctive used to and still occurs more frequently in American English than in BrE, but it is also believed to be reestablishing itself in British English, presumably due to the American influence (Quirk 1985: 157).

The reasons for the use of the mandative subjunctive in American English have been summarized by Turner in his study entitled *The Marked Subjunctive in Contemporary English*, where he lists the following: ‘Economy of effort, predilection for archaic expressions - especially those which most effectively serve to distinguish the British and American varieties – the influence of immigrants’ home dialects and languages’ (Turner 1980: 273).

This view has been strongly opposed by John Algeo, who in his *British and American Mandative Constructions* expresses himself in this way:

Economy of effort’ is doubtless a real factor in language change, though in constant tension with a need for redundancy to counteract ‘noise’ on the communicative channel. When applied to specific constructions, such as the mandative subjunctive, however, ‘economy’ is often a non-explanation since it can be used to account for either the retention or the loss of the feature, depending on how it is interpreted (Algeo 1992: 603).

On closer inspection, one might say that it is very likely that when Turner tries to explain the reasons for the use of the mandative subjunctive in AmE he has in mind the other two syntactic variants which exist in BrE, and presuming that that is the case, then the term *economy of effort* makes a lot of sense since both the British alternatives to the mandative subjunctive take an ‘extra effort.’ In the case of the periphrastic mandative the modal *should* needs to be added in front of the verb form and in the case of the indicative mandative, at least, an extra –s is needed in the third person singular.

It is important to point out that there are patterns of preference both in BrE and AmE with regard to the choice between the mandative subjunctive, putative *should* and the indicative:

- (143) The doctor *recommended that she take a long walk* every day. (verb-governed mandative subjunctive, especially AmE)
- (144) The doctor *recommended that she should take a long a walk* every day. (*should*-mandative, especially BrE)
- (145) The doctor *recommended that she takes a long walk* every day. (indicative, especially BrE)

It is generally believed that AmE prefers the mandative subjunctive to the modal subjunctive or the indicative. BrE prefers the periphrastic variants to the mandative subjunctive, that is, the modal subjunctive or the indicative. The main criterion then for

distinguishing between the mandative subjunctive and the indicative is the absence of DO-support, as well as the absence of an –s inflection. It must be pointed out that the indicative is used in *that*-clauses whenever the verb gives factual information. So what you get is a mandative indicative instead of a mandative subjunctive. In BrE again, there is a preference for the subjunctive and not the indicative whenever the agentive, most of the times simply implied, is willing to perform the action:

(146) I recommended that he *reapply* for a scholarship.

(147) He was unwilling to go to the theatre, but I recommended that he *went*.

In BrE, the *should*-mandative construction can replace both instances in (146) and (147). Therefore we would have instead:

(148) I recommended that he *should reapply* for a scholarship.

(149) He was unwilling to go to the theatre, but I recommended that he *should go*.

(150) The lights on the tree were switched on in 1955 by the Mayor of Oslo, tradition dictates that this *takes place* on the first Thursday of December. (*The Independent* 2013a, accessed 12.12.13)

(151) I *insist* that she *remains* determined to succeed. (indicative)

(152) I *insist* that she remain determined to succeed. (subjunctive)

In BrE, the indicative, either present or past, agrees with the tense of the verb in the superordinate clause:

(153) I *insist/insisted* that she *remains/remained* determined to succeed.

There is something else that needs to be said about the verb *insist*. According to *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English*, when *insist* is used as a transitive verb, it has two meanings: (1) 'to demand that something happens or that somebody agrees to do something' and (2) 'to say firmly that something is true, especially when other people do not believe you'.

(154) She *insisted* that he *wear* a suit. (indirect directive implied)

(155) He *insisted* that he was innocent. (statement implied)

The first meaning of *insist* in example (154) is mandative; the second meaning in example (155) is not. The semantic distinction between the first and second meaning of *insist* is obvious and very significant too, but few dictionaries make such a distinction.

At this stage I would like to point out another feature of the English language when it comes to using verbs like *insist*. The mandative subjunctive as illustrated in the example (154) can be easily avoided by using the following construction, *insist* + *preposition* + *-ing* form of the verb:

- (156) She *insisted* on his/him wearing a suit.

The mandative subjunctive can only be distinguished from the indicative with a singular subject. With a plural subject, it becomes impossible to tell the difference between the two, hence the neutralization of the two moods:

- (157) The tenants started a court action to challenge a decision that they *pay* higher rents.

- (158) ‘Then I suggest,’ Mr Vincent said, ‘that we *leave* the General behind’ (Green 1990: 1037).

In the example (157) *pay* follows the plural subject *they*, so it is possible to interpret the base form *pay* either as a subjunctive or as an indicative. Equally in (158) the plural subject *we* precedes the base form *leave*.

There is a general tendency in BrE to make good use of the subjunctive especially in those cases when the finite verb is *be*. On these occasions, the preferred voice is the passive voice:

- (159) She suggested that conclusions *be drawn* by everyone present in the meeting.

Another characteristic of BrE is that *that*-clauses with *should* are quite frequent in structures with anticipatory *it*. This is illustrated in the following example:

- (160) *It* is paramount that the rights of minorities (*should*) *be protected* across the world. (adjective governed mandative subjunctive with anticipatory *it*)



### 4.3.2 Other uses of the present subjunctive

The present subjunctive can also be used in other contexts in subordinate clauses; to express an open condition, the present subjunctive is sometimes used in conditional clauses, instead of the normal present tense, whereas in clauses of concession and purpose, the verb in the subjunctive mood is used to express a *putative* meaning rather than a factual one.

- Clauses of condition and concession:

(161)      (*Even*) *if that be* the official stance, it cannot be taken seriously. (formal)

It must be stressed that the usage illustrated through the above-mentioned example is mainly confined to formal, very formal or legal contexts.

(162)      *Whatever be the reason for it*, more Britons are emigrating to Australia today than at any time since the 1950s.

In colloquial English, it is possible to leave out the subjunctive form of the verb and reduce the phrase *whatever be the reason for it* into *whatever the reason*.

Hypothetical conditions in English can also be expressed in other alternative ways:

- i.          *was/were to* + the infinitive form of the verb:

(163)      If it *were to snow*, we should go skiing.

(164)      If the Lady Aliena *were to be* at the Epiphany service, it would be painfully embarrassing for them all, but nevertheless his heart quickened at the thought of seeing her again (Follett 1989: 165).

- ii.        putative *should* + the infinitive form of the verb:

(165)      If a serious problem *should come up*, we would have to be prepared to deal with it.

With both structures in (i) and (ii) inversion is also possible:

(166)      *Were it to snow*, we should go skiing. (*were* subjunctive)

(167)      *Should* a serious problem *come up*, we would have to be prepared to deal with it. (putative *should*)

The very same clauses of condition or concession can be used in poetry as well. The two following examples are taken from Byron and Shakespeare:

(168) Byron: *Though* the heart *be* still as loving...(though the heart is) (Thomson & Martinet (1980: 250).

(169) Shakespeare: If this *be* error, and upon me proved...(if this is error) (Thomson & Martinet (1980: 250).

- Clauses of condition or negative purpose introduced by *lest* or *for fear that*:

(170) The President must accept this plan lest he *be defeated* in the Senate. (Mitchell 1994: 45)

(171) I have brought documents to attest the truth of my story *lest* anyone (*should*) *doubt* it.

It is claimed that *lest* constructions are restricted to very formal usage in British English, but they are more common in American English.

(172) She refused to make any remarks *for fear that* he *take* them personally.

(173) They explained the situation to Peter in order that he *not cancel* the agreement.  
(negative purpose)

It is also interesting to note the phrase *if need be*, which means ‘if it is necessary’.

(174) That, *if need be*, could be sorted out at a later date. (BNC, search for *if need be*).

Another interesting case is the front-positioning of the main verb in conditional-concessive constructions. This case could very well be interpreted as optative subjunctive:

(175) *Come what may*... (‘Whatever may happen...’)

Present subjunctive *come* is also used in a temporal clause without a subordinator. It is generally initial:

(176) *Come Sunday* he will have to face the music. (‘When Sunday comes...’)

(177) The supposition is that *come tomorrow* the inspectors will be allowed to have access to the site. (‘When tomorrow comes...’)

(178) *Be that as it may*...(‘However that may be...’)

(179) *Suffice it to say*...

(180) *Be he friend or enemy*, I will have nothing to do with him in the future.

Both constructions *suffice it to say* and *be he friend or enemy*, are quite rare and literary too.

Another way of expressing the subjunctive is by means of inversion:

- (181) *Had* I the time, I would spend more quality time with my family.

### (1) The formulaic subjunctive

Just like the mandative subjunctive, the *formulaic subjunctive* is made up of the base form of the verb. It is mainly used in certain set expressions in independent clauses:

- (182) God *save* the Queen! ('May God save the Queen')
- (183) 'God *forbid*,' said Molly, her large face, always highly coloured, even more flushed: she was annoyed. (Lessing 2007: 35)
- (184) *Be* that as it may, his work is not just good enough.
- (185) *Be* it noted that she tried hard, in spite of the fact that she did not succeed.  
(rather archaic and formal)
- (186) *Suffice* (it) to say (that) the holiday was a complete disaster. ('Let it suffice')

Similarly, one can come across the following set expressions in present-day English: *God bless you! Heaven help us! Heaven forbid! God forgive you! Heaven be praised! Curse this fog! Come what may! Have mercy on us! Damn you! Long live the Republic! Have a nice trip! Try as I might, as it were*, et cetera.

It must be said that the expression of will conveyed by the subjunctive in the above-mentioned set phrases can also be expressed through the use of *may* or *let*.

- (187) Now *may* God bless you all! (Prime Minister Chamberlain, BBC News 1999, Special Report)
- (188) My own mother, Lord *rest* her, had scarcely told me thing. (O'Connor 2000: 65)

Formulaic independent clause subjunctives, as Stern *et al.* (1993: 62) point out, 'are all slightly quaint, though they serve useful, if somewhat specialized, purpose.'

I searched the BNC and COCA for *as it were*. In many cases, this set expression is employed with full semantic content signifying *so to speak*. The results of the search were quite impressive. The expression was attested 998 times in the BNC and 1733 times in COCA. The respective raw frequencies were 43.36 per million words in the BNC and 3.73 per million words in COCA. In both corpora, the expression *as it were*, was mostly attested in the spoken categories, which may be an indication of its frequent use in everyday language. The following example is taken from the BNC:

- (189) The essence of the concept must, *as it were*, be detached from the practice.  
(BNC)

## **(2) The subjunctive in reported speech**

Normally, there is no reported speech construction for the optative subjunctive, but whenever it expresses a wish, the construction with *may* or *might* is also possible:

- (190) ‘God bless you all!’ said the President = The President expressed the wish that God *might bless* them all.

In the case of the mandative subjunctive, no backshift occurs:

- (191) ‘They insisted that he *apologize* immediately,’ she said = She said that they (had) insisted that he *apologize* immediately

In cases when there is a change in time reference, the *were*-subjunctive or hypothetical past is back-shifted to hypothetical past perfective:

- (192) ‘If he *were* more sensible, he would take up the offer,’ she said.  
(193) She said that if he *had been* more sensible, he would have taken up the offer.

If the preposition is still valid in the reported speech, then backshift is optional:

- (194) ‘If I *were* in London now, I would visit the British Museum,’ he said = He said that if he *were* in London then, he would visit the British Museum.  
(195) He said that if he *had been* in London then, he would have visited the British Museum.

Unreal past tenses or else subjunctives in indirect speech after *wish*, *would rather/sooner* and *it is time* do not change:

- (196) 'We *wish* we *didn't have to* take exams,' said they = They said they *wished* they *didn't have to* take exams (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 193).
- (197) 'Bill wants to go alone,' said Ann, 'but *I'd rather* he *went* with a group' = Ann said that Bill wanted to go alone but that she 'd rather he went with a group (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 193).
- (198) '*It's time* we *began* planning our holidays,' he said = He said that *it was time* they *began* planning their holidays (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 193).

*I/he/she/we/they had better* remains unchanged whereas *you had better* can remain unchanged or be reported by advise + object + infinitive:

- (199) 'The children *had better go* to bed early,' said Tom = Tom said that the children *had better go* to bed early (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 193).
- (200) '*You'd better not drink* the water,' she said = She advised/warned us not to drink the water (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 193).

Conditional sentences type 2, which refer to present/future, and type 3 which refer to the past, also remain unchanged:

- (201) 'If my children *were* older I would emigrate,' he said = He said that if his children *were* older he would emigrate.
- (202) 'If I *had* a permit I could get a job,' he said = He said that if he *had* a permit he could get a job (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 150).
- (203) 'If she *had loved* Tom,' he said, 'she wouldn't have left him' = He said that if she *had loved* Tom she wouldn't have left him (Thomson & Martinet 1980: 150).

### **(3) Suasive verbs in *that*-clauses**

The main characteristic of all suasive verbs is that they can be followed by a *that*-clause either with the mandative subjunctive or with putative *should*. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* *suasion* is a noun which means 'persuasion as opposed to force.' The adjective, suasive, derives from Old French *suasion* or Latin *suasio*, from *suadēre suas*- 'urge.' There is

also a third alternative, a *that*-clause with an indicative verb which is largely restricted to British English:

- (204) She begged that she *be* allowed to go.
- (205) She begged that she *should be* allowed to go.
- (206) She begged that she *is* allowed to go.

The choice between the three constructions above varies a lot between AmE and BrE. AmE favours the mandative subjunctive, while British English prefers the putative *should* and occasionally the indicative, which is generally not accepted in AmE.

Generally speaking, suasive verbs fall into two subgroups, *public* verbs and *private* verbs. A *public* verb can be differentiated from a *private* verb in the sense that the former describes indirect directives such as *request*, *demand*, *urge*, et cetera, whereas the latter describes states of desire or volition, such as, *intend*, *desire*, *pray*, et cetera:

- (207) The report *urged* that all school children *be* taught to swim. (*public*)
- (208) She *prayed* that he recover from his illness. (*private*)

Sometimes the differences between public and private verbs are not very clear and thus the distinction becomes blurred.

The following list is an all-inclusive list for the most common public and private verbs in English: Agree, allow, arrange, ask, beg, command, concede, decide, decree, demand, desire, determine, enjoin, ensure, entreat, grant, insist, instruct, intend, move, ordain, order, pledge, pray, prefer, pronounce, propose, recommend, request, require, resolve, rule, stipulate, suggest, urge, vote.

As it was mentioned above, a suasive verb can be followed by an infinitive construction in a *that*-clause:

- (209) The authorities intended the rebellion *to be* brutally suppressed.
- (210) The authorities intended that the rebellion (*should*) *be* brutally suppressed.

#### (4) The putative *should*

Mostly in British English, the modal auxiliary *should* is used in *that*-clauses to convey the idea of a putative situation. Such contexts normally ask for a present subjunctive. *Should* in subordinate clauses, more precisely *that*-clauses, does not express a subordinate statement of fact, but a *putative* notion:

(211) I am surprised that she *should win* every tennis tournament. (Putative idea expressed)

(212) I am surprised that she wins every tennis tournament. (Factual statement expressed)

It is also possible to use a perfective form:

(213) I *was surprised* that he *should have won* every tennis tournament last year.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 1014), ‘Here, as often, the difference is mainly one of nuance, since the factual bias of the matrix clause overrides the doubt otherwise implicit in the *should*-construction.’

It is important to point out here that *should* in such clauses does not convey any sense of *obligation* at all, but the possibility of interpreting it in the *obligatory* sense of *ought to*, can not be excluded. In the following examples, the notion of non-factuality is evident:

(214) It is unimaginable that he *should reject* my offer.

Very often, in cases when the *should*-construction is close in meaning to a conditional *if*-clause, its non-factual bias comes out very clearly:

(215) It is a pity that they *should lack* so much resilience.

(216) It is a pity *if* they lack so much resilience.

(217) I prefer her to try again

In example (217), the verb in the matrix clause is *prefer*. The verb here expresses an emotional reaction. In such cases a *that*-clause with *should* is often replaced by an infinitive clause:

(300) I prefer that she *try* again.

The same applies to cases when the matrix clause contains verbs, adjectives or nouns that carry a necessity, plan or intention for the future.

Now, the infinitive clause can very well be replaced by a present subjunctive, especially in American English:

- (218) He insisted that we *be given* equal rights.

The use of the present subjunctive or putative *should* in subordinate clauses evokes the suasive meanings of the verbs *insist* and *suggest*:

- (219) I *insisted* that he *change* his mind.  
(220) I *insisted* that he *should change* his mind.  
(221) I *insisted* that he *changed* his mind.  
(222) She *suggested* that I *be* available to help at any time.  
(223) She *suggested* that I *should be* available to help at any time.

In the following example, *suggest* is used to express a tentative meaning:

- (224) She *suggested* that I am available to help at any time.

The verbs *require*, *assert* and *recommend* can be used to replace *insist* in the above-mentioned examples.

Occasionally, the putative and obligational meanings of *should* merge together:

- (225) The study recommended that the teaching of foreign languages *should be* improved.  
(226) The study recommended that the teaching of foreign languages *be* improved.  
(227) The study recommended that the teaching of foreign languages *ought to be* improved.

It will be noted that in example (227) obligation is clearly expressed.

(d) One should not confound the putative *should* with the tentative *should* which is used in open conditions with *if*-clauses:

- (228) If he *should be* keen on cycling, I will buy him a bike.

Inversion can be used instead without any significant change in meaning:



(229) *Should* he *be* keen on cycling, I will buy him a bike.

Putative *should* also occurs in certain idiomatic expressions and exclamations:

(230) That he *should* dare call me names!

Finally, the modals *may* and *might* could be very well considered ‘subjunctive replacements’ when used in concessive and purpose clauses, especially in formal style:

(231) Wealthy as you *might* be, you cannot spend all your life holidaying.

#### 4.3.3 The *were*-subjunctive or the past subjunctive

The forms and functions of the past subjunctive are really circumscribed, but it seems appropriate to recognise (Denison 1997: 162).

Three morphological processes have all but destroyed the past subjunctive. Inflectional reduction early made it indistinguishable from the indicative in the plural of strong verbs, and throughout the past tense of weak verbs. Before the ModE period strong verbs apart from *was/were* lost all singular/plural distinction in 1 and 3 past tense, and with it the possibility of explicit subjunctive marking in 1 and 3 past SG. Finally, the whole 2 SG paradigm disappeared with the loss of *thou*, leaving BE as the only verb with an explicit mood distinction in the past tense. (Denison (1997: 161)

Given all these facts, it has been argued that there is no such verbal form as ‘past subjunctive’ (Palmer 1988:46), Huddleston (1984: 83).

The *were*-subjunctive, or the past subjunctive, is referred to as such because it is restricted to the form *were*. That means that it can be identified as such only in the first and third persons singular. In the other cases it is not distinct from the indicative forms. The *were*-subjunctive is more typical of formal language and, more importantly, it is hypothetical in meaning. That means it can be used in hypothetical conditional clauses and in other similar constructions with hypothetical meaning. In informal contexts, *were* can be replaced by the indicative form *was*. Typical examples of the *were*-subjunctive can also be found in some conditional clauses and expressions like *as it were*, *if I were you*, et cetera.

(232) I would not have turned for assistance to you if I *were* not desperate.  
(Tzouliadis 2008: 262)

- (233) If I *were* a Scot, I might vote yes to independence. (*The Guardian* 2014, last accessed 8.12.14)

The verb *wish* and the verb *suppose* in the imperative mood may be followed by a *that*-clause in the hypothetical past or the *were*-subjunctive:

- (234) I wish I *were* taller.  
(235) Suppose he *were* to help you leave [...] (Tzouliadis2008: 269).

The *were*-subjunctive which is commonly found in adverbial clauses, is often introduced by the conjunctions *if, as if, as though, though*:

- (236) Ah, me! I remember it all as if it *were* yesterday. (Mollett 1990: 684)  
(237) They talked as if talk *were* what had been denied to them both, as if they *were* starving for talk. (Lessing 2007: 11)

The very same *were*-subjunctive, which is commonly found in adverbial clauses and introduced by the conjunctions *if, as if, as though, though* and in *that*-clauses after the verbs *wish* and *suppose*, can be replaced by indicative forms in informal styles when the reference is to present time. The same is true about the imperatives *suppose* and *imagine*:

- (238) I wish I *was* taller.  
(239) If she *was* here today, she would certainly regret not coming on holiday.  
(240) Ah, me! I remember it all as if it *was* yesterday.

The modal idiom *would rather*, or its short form construction *'d rather*, is another example of a hypothesis verb usage:

- (241) Many people would rather the local bus service *were* more reliable.

The indicative can also be used as it does in the following example:

- (242) Many people would rather the local bus service was more reliable.

#### **4.3.4 Subjunctives and other mandative constructions: semantic distinctiveness and ambiguity**

The non-distinctive forms of the subjunctive are quite often interpreted as indicative wherever possible. A very good case of the two categories overlapping can be seen in the following

example: I suggest that you *read The Times and The Guardian* every day. It is obvious that the type of modality intended here is very unclear.

According to Francis (1986: 04),

We can only speculate about why this should be so, but perhaps the reason is that the indicative has always been more frequent overall and often more frequent in uses which have allowed either mood. With a trend underway to interpret non-distinctive forms as indicative, we can assume that whenever the indicative was semantically inappropriate, speakers would try to find substitutes for the non-distinctive subjunctive in order to avoid confusion or misinterpretation.

The choice between mandative constructions and other alternatives to express, to some extent, similar meanings may be a limiting factor in the usage of mandative constructions. This may be true especially if one considers the fact that the mandative subjunctive is generally regarded as a feature that many native speakers often like to avoid or, at least, do not feel very comfortable with. According to Hudson (1993: 399) the subjunctive ‘is to many people a bewildering, even threatening phenomenon.’ Interestingly, Edmund S.C. Weiner warns against the use of the mandative subjunctive. Weiner (1982: 179) cautions:

Beware of constructions in which the sense hangs on a fine distinction between subjunctive and indicative, for example: *The most important thing for Argentina is that Britain recognize her sovereignty over the Falklands*. The implication is that Britain does not recognize it. A small slip that changed *recognize* to *recognizes* would disastrously reverse this implication. The use of *should* would render the sense quite unmistakable.

Algeo (1992: 602) is of a different opinion. He maintains:

Ironically, the recommended mend, *should recognize*, is genuinely ambiguous for all varieties of English, since it can be either the putative *should* intended here or the *should* of moral obligation meaning *ought to*, which does not disastrously reverse the meaning of the sentence. The subjunctive in this and similar constructions is in fact the clearer option.

In BrE, though, the indicative is used to express a subjunctive meaning, as is clear from the following example. The current British Prime Minister, David Cameron, said recently in a BBC interview: ‘It is important that the Euro *is* successful.’ It is clear from this usage of the indicative that it can also express the meaning of *be successful*, since we all know that the Euro has not been successful at all, at least over the past few years. The question that arises

here is, why the mandative indicative and not the mandative subjunctive? Algeo (1992: 613) states:

It seems, however, that BrE does have a characteristic option for mandative constructions that is lacking or very rare in American (English). That is the use of the indicative in the subordinate clause. Acceptability tests for this option need to be made among both Britons and Americans, but it is quite rare in American corpora. Pending further research on this option, it appears to be diagnostic of British English.

I did a little research in the British National Corpus, a corpus of about a million words, with the intention of trying to find an answer to the question as to why the British PM had preferred the indicative to the subjunctive. I searched for *it is important that* as the trigger of the subjunctive in the subordinate clause. The findings confirmed Algeo's statement that the indicative mandative construction is a favourite option in British English. Specifically, after investigating *it is important that* I got the following results.

The search returned 648 instances all in all, which I had to filter through manually. It must be said that the process was quite laborious and time-consuming. Forty-two per cent, or 272 out of 648 instances, were indicative mandatives. Twenty per cent or 130 out of 648 instances were modal mandatives whereas the mandative subjunctive made up only 4.9 per cent with only 32 instances. There were another 214 instances of non-distinct cases where it was practically impossible to determine whether an indicative or a subjunctive had been used. In percentage terms that corresponded to 33%. (See table 20 in chapter 6) Hence, it may be said that there is no element of surprise in the fact that the indicative was used when the PM was talking about the Euro. When the subjunctive trigger in the main clause is the adjective *important* preceded by the anticipatory *it*, and the speaker is British, then you expect the indicative mandative in the subordinate clause to be the first option.

A couple of weeks ago the European Students' Union, a Brussels-based organization, came up with an official statement regarding the recent events in Crimea. On their site, [www.esu-online.org](http://www.esu-online.org) one could read the following sentences: 'We, the students of Europe, demand that Ukraine's democratic development *is* under the control of Ukrainians, with the support – only upon request – of the entire international community. Let Ukraine *decide* its own fate.'

This is another clear example where the indicative mandative is used instead of the mandative subjunctive. One could only speculate here as to why the indicative form *is*, is preferred to the subjunctive form *be*, especially with the verb *demand*, which is one of the strongest and most productive triggers of the mandative subjunctive both in AmE and BrE. (See chapter 6)

The declaration issued by the European Students' Union was signed by its newly elected leader, Rok Promožic, a Law graduate from Ljubljana University in Slovenia, hence not a British native speaker. The only explanations that could be given for the choice of the indicative mandative instead of the mandative subjunctive are: (a) the compiler of the text is someone who is more exposed to BrE than AmE and therefore more influenced by it; (b) the use of the subjunctive is more complicated and difficult than it is generally believed. In fact, it may be that the very use of the subjunctive poses a real challenge to the majority of non-native speakers.

The mandative subjunctive has got other alternatives apart from *should* and the indicative. The object with infinitive construction is another case in point.

(243) We ask that all the participants *be* cautious. (subjunctive)

(244) We ask the participants *to be* cautious. (infinitive)

There are two important questions that need to be answered in this section: How can one deal with the question of semantic ambiguity? Should the non-distinct forms be counted as mandative?

According to Vallins' (1956: 38) 'The use of *should*, *may*, *might*, *would* in main clauses, and in subordinate clauses, especially after *if*, is bound up with the disappearance of the inflectional subjunctive'.

The implication here is that the modal auxiliaries replaced subjunctive forms in most of the cases. If not about the main clause, this is certainly true about the subordinate clause, where subjunctive usage persists. To what degree, though, are modal and indicative forms used after suasive verbs in mandative *that*-clauses semantically identical to mandative subjunctives? Hundt (1998: 160) states that in practice, the solution to this problem is 'far from obvious'.

Övergaard expresses the view that ‘the subjunctive can replace all periphrastic alternants, but not vice versa, i. e. the modals are more specified both in meaning and in usage’ (1995:54).

Also, Hoffmann (1997: 36) claims that the non-inflected subjunctive expresses the core meanings of volition and futurity whereas the periphrastic construction covers a whole range of more specified meanings and functions. This presupposes that the modal periphrasis can not be semantically identical to the mandative subjunctive and vice versa. Moreover, Hoffmann suggests that the periphrastic variant tends to express a result-based concept, in other words, the aim of a speaker is not to force somebody to do something but to lay emphasis on the desired result of an action. Hence, it can be concluded here that relationship between the principal clause and the subordinate clause is less direct in cases when the modal periphrastic alternative is used.

According to (Quirk and Rusiecki 1982: 379-94), ‘...in British use the indicative is more likely when the context shows that the actor in the subordinate clause is reluctant to perform the action and that the modal *should* is more likely when the actor is willing.’

Adding a cultural dimension, one might add that, avoiding directness is very often an element of British culture and it is linked with the central strategies for interpersonal reaction (Wierzbicka (2007: 61).

It might be interesting to see what else Wierzbicka (2007: 62) has to say on this issue:

In any society, one of the key problems is getting other people to do what one wants them to do. In many societies, this problem tends to be solved on the basis of power differentiation. Hierarchical structures and accepted patterns of inequality often make it clear who can tell whom what to do. From the point of view of the powerless, the answer may often lie in begging, imploring and the like, that is, in putting pressure on the powerful by appealing to their feelings. It may also lie in a system of asymmetrical relationships of ‘patronage’, that is, a pattern of care and responsibility for others (one’s ‘dependants’) that is associated with a higher status.

In democratic societies like Britain...other patterns have come to the fore, patterns based on assumptions and values of equality, individual autonomy, voluntary co-operation, mutual concessions and so on. In this cultural climate, the scope for orders and commands is limited and at the same time there is less room for patronage...But if one can neither give orders and commands nor beg, implore, plead, or appeal for mercy, help, or patronage, how does one get others to do what one wants them to do?

This could partly explain why, in BrE, the modal mandative and the mandative indicative are often preferred to the subjunctive. It could well be that using the periphrastic alternatives might imply trying to avoid patronising and sounding superior or simply giving a direct order. In my view, both the modal mandative and the indicative mandative take on the qualities of a ‘lubricant demeanour’ in the manner of your approach to issuing an order or a command, which is what mandative constructions are all about. In other words, using the subjunctive alternatives can be nothing else but bearing in mind an important key to some Anglo cultural scripts.

## 5 A comparison between the subjunctive in English and French

The violent arrival of the Normans, relatively few in number but profound in their impact on English life, was ultimately to work to the benefit of the English language. New words and phrases were added in profusion to the existing stock, while the inevitable interchange between the indigenous population and their new overlords produced a simplification in linguistic structures. The gains for Old English and Norman French speakers were mutual, but by the time the process was complete there were no longer two languages (Gooden 2011: 45).

It goes without saying that the influence of Norman French upon English was undeniably great. It mostly impacted English in terms of its vocabulary and grammar. Although French today is an inflected language, while English is mostly an analytical one, there seem to be good grounds for drawing a comparison between the uses of the subjunctive in the two languages. While presenting the most important cases when the subjunctive is required in French, I will make an attempt to compare it with the subjunctive in English and at the same time, point out any similarities and differences that may exist.

In French, there is a present subjunctive, a past subjunctive and a pluperfect subjunctive. The latter is simply a literary form found only in the written language. In spoken French, the pluperfect subjunctive is replaced by the past subjunctive. Just like in English, there is no future subjunctive. If the action refers to the future, then the present subjunctive is used:

- (245) Je te téléphonerai bien que tu *sois* en Angleterre.  
(I will call you even though you will be in England.)

It is important to point out that there is a fourth tense of the subjunctive in French and that is called *l'imparfait*. There is no such equivalent tense in English, and therefore it requires an effort for any non-native speaker of French to fully understand this special usage.

The present subjunctive of the verbs *être* 'to be' and *avoir* 'to have' have got distinctive forms for all persons singular and plural, which is not the case in English. The following tables illustrate the case in point:



Table 8 Être ‘To Be’ and avoir ‘To Have’ (Mauger 1955:20)

<i>Être</i>	<i>Avoir</i>
(Il faut) que je <i>sois</i> honnête	(Il faut) que j’ <i>aie</i> du courage
que tu <i>sois</i> honnête	que tu <i>aies</i> du courage
qu’il <i>soit</i> honnête	qu’il <i>ait</i> du courage
que nous <i>soyons</i> honnête	que nous <i>ayons</i> du courage
que vous <i>soyez</i> honnête	que vous <i>ayez</i> du courage
qu’ils <i>soient</i> honnête	qu’ils <i>aient</i> du courage

It becomes clear from the table above that with the exception of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular of the verb *être* ‘to be’, which are similar, all the forms for the other persons are distinct in the present subjunctive of these two important verbs.

For regular verbs and certain common irregular verbs the present subjunctive is formed by taking the stem of the *ils/elles* form of the present tense and adding *–e*, *–es*, *–e*, *–ions*, *–iez*, *–ient*.

Most verbs in the present subjunctive fall into three separate groups in modern French. All those verbs which end in *–er* in their infinitive form make up the 1<sup>st</sup> group. The verb *parler* ‘to speak’ is a good example:

Table 9 Present subjunctive in the three groups (De Smet et al. 1981:79, 85, 100)

<b>1<sup>st</sup> group</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> group (<i>–ir</i>)</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> group (<i>–re</i>)</b>
(il faut) que je <i>parle</i>	(il faut) que je <i>finisse</i>	(il faut) que j’ <i>attende</i>
que tu <i>parles</i>	que tu <i>finisses</i>	que tu <i>attendes</i>
qu’il <i>parle</i>	qu’il <i>finisse</i>	qu’il <i>attende</i>
que nous <i>parlions</i>	que nous <i>finissions</i>	que nous <i>attendions</i>
que vous <i>parliez</i>	que vous <i>finissiez</i>	que vous <i>attendiez</i>
qu’il <i>parlent</i>	qu’ils <i>finissent</i>	qu’ils <i>attendent</i>

There are quite a small number of verbs which do not follow the general rule of forming the present subjunctive:

Table 10 Verbs which do not follow the general rule of forming the present subjunctive (Mauger 1955: 27)

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> person singular</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> person plural</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person plural</b>
<b>Aller (to go)</b>	que j' <i>aille</i> ...	que nous <i>allions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>aillent</i> ...
<b>Faire (to do)</b>	que je <i>fasse</i> ...	que nous <i>fassions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>fassent</i> ...
<b>Pouvoir (to be able to)</b>	que je <i>puisse</i> ...	que nous <i>puissions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>puissent</i> ...
<b>Savoir (to know)</b>	que je <i>sache</i> ...	que nous <i>sachions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>sachent</i> ...
<b>Valoir (to be worth)</b>	que je <i>vaille</i> ...	que nous <i>valions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>vaillent</i> ...
<b>Vouloir (to want)</b>	que je <i>veuille</i> ...	que nous <i>voulions</i> ...	qu'ils <i>veussent</i> ...

The following tables show the four tenses of the periphrastic subjunctive in French:

Table 11 The periphrastic subjunctive (Mauger (1955: 27)

<b>Présent</b>	<b>Passé</b>	<b>Imparfait</b>	<b>Plus-que-parfait</b>
que je me <i>regarde</i>	que je me <i>sois regardé</i>	que je me <i>regardasse</i>	que je me <i>fusse regardé</i>
que tu te <i>regardes</i>	que tu te <i>sois regardé</i>	que tu te <i>regardasses</i>	que tu te <i>fusses regardé</i>
qu'il se <i>regarde</i>	qu'il se <i>soit regardé</i>	qu'il se <i>regardât</i>	qu'il se <i>fût regardé</i>
que nous nous <i>regardions</i>	que nous nous <i>soyons regardés</i>	que nous nous <i>regardassions</i>	que nous nous <i>fussions regardés</i>
que vous vous <i>regardiez</i>	que vous vous <i>soyez regardés</i>	que vous vous <i>regardassiez</i>	que vous vous <i>fussiez regardés</i>
qu'ils se <i>regardent</i>	qu'ils se <i>soient regardés</i>	qu'ils se <i>regardassent</i>	qu'ils se <i>fussent regardés</i>

The following examples (246) – (291), unless differently specified, have been taken from De Smet (1981: passim).

The subjunctive in French is used to express unreality or volition, in other words what someone wants to happen or what might happen:

- (246) *Je veux que tu saches la vérité.*  
*(I want you to know the truth.)*

## 5.1 Uses of the subjunctive in French

The subjunctive in French is commonly found in subordinate clauses:

- after conjunctions *avant que* ‘before’, *en attendant que* ‘meanwhile’, *jusqu’à ce que* ‘until’, expressing time:

(247) On va boire un verre en attendant qu’il *arrive*.  
(We will have a drink as we wait for him to come.)

- after conjunctions *pour que* (so that), *afin que* (so that) expressing aim or goal and *de peur que* (for fear of, lest) and *de crainte que* (for fear that) expressing fear:

(248) Je te le dis pour que tu le *saches*.  
(I am telling you this so that you know it.)

The following example is a headline from the Swiss paper *Le Matin* on the day when Stanislas Wrawinka won the Australian Open in January 2014:

(249) Il y a de bonnes chances pour que je m’*enivre*. (*Le Matin* 2014 accessed 26.1.14)  
(It is very likely that I will get drunk.)

- after conjunctions *quoique* ‘although’, *bien que* ‘even though’, *malgré que* ‘in spite of’ expressing concession:

(250) Bien qu’il *soit* sympa, elle ne l’aime pas (Beeching 2008: 125).  
(Although he is nice, she does not like him.)

- after *pourvu que* ‘provided that’, ‘if’, ‘as long as’, *à condition que* ‘on condition that’, *à moins que* ‘unless’, *en supposant que*, *à supposer que*, *supposé que* ‘supposing that’ introducing conditional clauses:

(251) Le temps est magnifique pourvu que la température ne *monte* plus.  
(The weather is great as long as the temperature does not rise any further.)

Again in conditional clauses, the subjunctive is used in those cases when the conjunction *si* (if) is followed by the conjunction *que* (that):

(252) Si tu es libre et que tu *veuilles* venir, téléphone-moi.

(If you are free and want to come, phone me.)

- after *sans que* (without) introducing clauses of result:

(253) Il est parti sans que je l'*aie* remarqué.

(He left without me noticing it.)

It may be important to clarify at this stage that after the conjunction *de sorte que* 'so that' both the indicative and the subjunctive can follow. When the result is perceived as something concrete or real, the indicative is used; when the action is perceived as an aim or wish then the subjunctive is used:

(254) Le guide parle très vite, de sorte que personne ne le *comprend*. (indicative)

(The guide talks so fast that no one can understand him.)

(255) Parlez plus lentement de sorte qu'on vous *comprenne*. (subjunctive)

(Speak more slowly so that others can understand you.)

- after the conjunction *où que* 'wherever' introducing a local clause:

(256) Je le suivrai où qu'il *puisse* aller.

(I will follow him wherever he goes.)

The subjunctive in French is also used after certain impersonal expressions like, *il faut que* 'must', *il vaut mieux que* 'it is better if', 'it would be better if', *il convient que* 'it is suitable that', *il suffit que* 'one needs only to', *il est nécessaire que* 'it is necessary that', *il est temps que* 'it is time', *il est urgent que* 'it is urgent that', *il est important que* 'it is important that', *il est juste que* 'it is just that', *il est intéressant que* 'it is interesting that', *il est normal que* 'it is normal that', *il est naturel que* 'it is natural that' denoting:

- necessity:

(257) Il faut que je vous *dise*... (Beaching 2008: 125).

(I must tell you... .)

- possibility after, *il est (im)possible que* 'it is (im)possible that', *il est douteux que* 'it is doubtful that', *il est (peu) probable que* 'it is probable that', *il se peut que* 'it may be that', 'it is possible that':

(258) Il est possible que je *reçoive* une lettre aujourd'hui.

(It is possible that I receive a letter today.)

- feelings, opinions, sentiments and uncertainty after, *c'est dommage que* 'it is a pity that', *il est desirable que* 'it is desirable that', *il est souhaitable que* 'it is desirable that', *il est preferable que* 'it is preferable that', *il est bon que* 'it is good that', *il est mauvais que* 'it is bad that', *il est regrettable que* 'it is regrettable that', *il est triste que* 'it is sad that', *il est heureux que* 'it is fortunate that', *il est malheureux que* 'it is unfortunate that', *il est affreux que* 'it is dreadful that', *il est étonnant que* 'it is surprising that', *il est curieux que* 'it is strange that', *il est bizarre que* 'it is weird that', *il est extraordinaire que* 'it is extraordinary that', *il est à souhaiter que* 'it is to be hoped that', *il est à craindre que* 'it is to be feared that':

(259) C'est dommage qu'il *soit* malade (Robert 1977: 877).

(It is a pity that he has fallen ill.)

(260) 'C'est bien dommage qu'elle *soit devenue* si laide' (Voltaire, Le Petit Robert, 2004, electronic version 2.2)

(It is really a pity that she has become so ugly.)

- The subjunctive is used after certain verbal phrases expressing a wish, a desire, an order, a command et cetera: *vouloir que* 'want', *aimer que* 'love', *desire que* 'wish', *préférer que* 'prefer', *souhaiter que* 'wish', *commander que* 'command', *ordonner que* 'order', *exiger que* 'demand', *réclamer que* 'ask for', *permettre que* 'allow', *tolérer que* 'tolerate':

(261) Où veux-tu que j'*aille*?

(Where do you want me to go?)

- The subjunctive in French is also used after certain verbs and expressions of doubt as well as after certain verbs expressing opinion or perception in the negative and interrogative form; these verbs and expressions are: *doubter que* 'doubt that', *être sûr* 'be sure that', *être certain que* 'be certain that', *être vrai que* 'be true that', *être probable que* 'be probable that', *être évident que* 'be evident that', *croire que* 'believe that', *penser que* 'be of the opinion that', *dire que* 'say that', *prétendre que* 'claim that', *voir que* 'see that':

(262) Je doute qu'il le *sache*.

(I doubt that he knows it.)

- after verbs expressing feelings or uncertainty:

*craindre que* ‘to fear that’, *avoir peur que* ‘be afraid that’, *regretter que* ‘be sorry that’, *se réjouir que* ‘rejoice that’:

- (263) J’ai peur qu’il *perde* son temps. (Beeching 2008: 125)  
(I am afraid he is wasting his time.)

The subjunctive is used after the construction ‘Be + adjective’ expressing feelings that are associated with actions perceived as non-factual:

*être étonné que* ‘be surprised that’, *être content que* ‘be happy/pleased that’, *être mécontent que* ‘be unhappy that’, *être heureux que* ‘be happy that’, *être malheureux que* ‘be unhappy that’, *être satisfait que* ‘be satisfied that’, *être ravi que* ‘be delighted that’, *être enchanté que* ‘be delighted that’, *être fâché que* ‘be angry that’, *être désolé que* ‘be sorry that’, *être triste que* ‘be sad that’, *être honteux que* ‘be ashamed that’:

- (264) Je suis content que tu *viennes* m’aider.  
(I am pleased that you are coming to help me.)

The subjunctive in French is also used in subordinate relative clauses in the following cases:

- after certain antecedents:

- (265) C’est le seul (*l’unique*) livre qui *m’ait plu*.  
(It is the only book that I liked.)

- When the verb expresses an action that refers to a fact, the indicative is used, but when the verb expresses an action that refers to non-fact then the subjunctive is used:

- (266) (Apportez-moi un livre qui me *plaise* (subjunctive)  
(Bring me a book which I can like.)

- (267) Vous m’avez apporté un livre qui me *plaît* beaucoup. (indicative)  
(You brought me a book which I really like.)

The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses as a complement to a noun that expresses will, doubt, feelings et cetera:

- (268) Quelle chance que vous m'*ayez averti*!  
(How lucky that you warned me!)

The subjunctive occasionally appears in object clauses; the usage of the indicative is also a possibility:

- (269) Je sais que cette règle *est* difficile (indicative).  
(I know that this rule is difficult.)  
(270) Que cette règle *soit* difficile, je le sais (subjunctive).  
(That this rule is difficult, I know.)

The subjunctive can interestingly be used even in the main clause proper to express:

- an order or command to a third person:  
(271) Qu'il se *taise*!  
(Let him be quiet!)
- a wish:  
(272) *Puissiez-vous* revenir sain et sauf!  
(May you come back safe and sound!)
- anger in certain exclamations:  
(273) Moi? Que je me *sois enfui*? Jamais!  
(Me? Running away? Never!)
- In certain set expressions:  
(274) Que Dieu vous *bénisse*!  
(God bless you!)

The present subjunctive in French can also appear in the passive voice:

- (275) Je souhaite que tu *sois interrogé* par le professeur (Mauger II, 1955: 22).  
(I wish you could be orally examined by the teacher.)

From the above example it becomes clear that the present subjunctive in French is formed by means of the present subjunctive of the verb être 'to be' plus the past participle of any given verb. For example:

*interroger* (to question), (1<sup>st</sup> group): que je *sois interrogé(e)*, que nous *soyons interrogé(e)s*, qu'ils (elles) *soient interrogé(e)s*.

*guérir* (to recover), (2<sup>nd</sup> group): que je *sois guéri(e)*, que nous *soyons guéri(e)s*, qu'ils (elles) *soient guéri(e)s*.

*voir* (to see), (3<sup>rd</sup> group): que je *sois vu(e)*, que nous *soyons vu(e)s*, qu'ils (elles) *soient vu(e)s*.

In French there is also a special kind of subjunctive which is called the imperative-subjunctive. This type of the subjunctive is used to express an order or command exclusively to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person without being dependent upon another verb:

(276) 'Que la lumière *soit*!' (Mauger II, 1955: 20)  
(Let there *be* light!)

(277) 'Finis, finissons, qu'il *finisse* le travail!' (Mauger II, 1955: 20)  
(Finish, let us finish, let the work *be finished*!')

## 5.2 Past subjunctive in French

The past subjunctive is used for the same reasons as the present subjunctive - to express emotion, doubts, et cetera. The past subjunctive is used when the verb in the subordinate clause - the verb that follows *que* - happened before the verb in the principal clause.

The past subjunctive may be used in a subordinate clause when the verb in the principal clause is in the present tense:

(278) Nous avons peur qu'il n'*ait* pas *mangé*.  
(We're afraid that he didn't eat.)

In those cases when the verb in the main clause is in the present conditional, the verb in the subordinate clause is used in the past subjunctive. This is typical of the written language:

(279) 'On voudrait que cette guerre *fût* la dernière.' (Mauger III, 1955: 163)  
(We wish this war *were* the last one.)

The past subjunctive is very often replaced by the present subjunctive:



- (280) Je craignais qu'il ne se *fâche* (present subjunctive).  
(I was afraid he might get angry.)
- (281) Je craignais qu'il ne se *fâchât* (past subjunctive).  
(I was afraid he would get angry.)

## 5.3 Similarities and differences between subjunctive usage in English and French

### 5.3.1 Similarities

The subjunctive, both in English and French, is used in those cases when the verb in the main clause expresses some doubt, uncertainty, wish or emotion.

There is no future subjunctive in either language. Any reference to the future is made through the present subjunctive.

The subjunctive can be used after certain impersonal expressions in both languages; some of those impersonal expressions are: *il est important que* (*it is important that*), *il est urgent que* (*it is urgent that*), *il est nécessaire que* (*it is necessary that*), et cetera:

- (282) Il est nécessaire que le défilé *commence* sans retard.  
(It is necessary that the parade *start* on time.)

The subjunctive in both languages is used more or less in the same way after certain verbs and verbal expressions denoting order and commands:

- (283) Elle a ordonné qu'il *sorte* immédiatement.  
(284) (She commanded that he *leave* immediately.)

The subjunctive is used both in English and French after certain set expressions:

- (285) Ainsi *soit* il!  
So *be* it!

In both English and French the subjunctive is used in concessive clauses.

Also, the subjunctive is used both in English and French after certain verbs or even expressions of desirability or insistence:

- (286) Le maire désire que l'électorat le *choisisse*.  
(The mayor desires that the electorate *choose* him.)

Another similarity is the fact the subjunctive can be used in the active voice as well as in the passive voice both in English and French.

### 5.3.2 Differences

It is generally believed that the subjunctive in English has got a formal or academic connotation. This connotation stands in total contrast to the status of the subjunctive in French, which is in most cases neutral.

The subjunctive is used more extensively in French than in English where it is rarely used and where even native speakers find it hard to cope with. There is no such thing in French; the subjunctive is simply an active part of French grammar, so if you do not master it, you cannot speak and write the language properly. The subjunctive in French is used effectively both in the spoken and written language whereas in English it is more typical of the latter one. This is one of the fundamental differences of subjunctive usage in these two languages.

Very often, especially in translation, a French subjunctive corresponds to an English present tense form:

- (287) Je ne pense pas que tu *aies* raison. (subjunctive)  
(I do not think that you are right.) (present tense)

The subjunctive in French is nearly always found in dependent clauses preceded by *que*. The equivalent of the French *que* in English is the complementizer *that*, which is often omitted:

- (288) Je suggère que nous *mangions* maintenant.  
(I suggest (that) we *eat* now.)

The endings *-e*, *-es*, *-e*, *-ions*, *-iez*, *-ient* make the present subjunctive in French formally distinct. Conversely, only the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular in the present subjunctive is distinct in English. All the other persons, singular and plural, are identical to the indicative forms.

There are four different tenses of the subjunctive in French. In each of them the verb is fully conjugated in a distinctive way which is different to the indicative. In English there is a present subjunctive, quite limited in use, and a distinct past subjunctive represented by *were*, that is, the simple past of the verb *to be*. It must be pointed out that in French the most commonly used forms of the subjunctive are the present and past subjunctive. The other two are more typical of the literary genre, so they are found only in the written language.

The verbs *être* ‘to be’ and *avoir* ‘to have’ have fully inflected forms in all the four tenses of the subjunctive in French. In English, the present subjunctive of these verbs corresponds to the infinitive form and therefore it is visible only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular where the –s of the indicative is missing. Again, it can be said that, with regard to the past subjunctive, it is only the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons singular of the verb *to be* which is differentiated from the indicative.

In French, the subjunctive can be used after superlatives. The exact construction would be: adj. in the superlative degree + *que* + subjunctive in the dependent clause. In English, the indicative is used instead of the subjunctive:

- (289) Voilà la plus belle photo d’art que j’aie jamais vue.  
(There is the most beautiful art picture I have ever seen.)

It might be worth mentioning that the construction of an adjective in the superlative degree followed by a subjunctive was not uncommon in Old English.

There is a special category of conjunctions which requires the use of the subjunctive in French. In other words, these conjunctions are regarded as subjunctive triggers. One has to memorize them, because not doing so, will certainly lead to trouble. The list is quite long, but only some of the most important ones are included here: *avant que* (before), *jusqu’à ce que* (until), *pour que* (so that), *pourvu que* (provided that), *quoique* (although), *sans que* (without):

- (290) Il est partie pour qu’elle puisse se concentrer.  
(He left so that she could concentrate.)

All in all, it may be said that the subjunctive is more widely used in French than in English and for that reason it is more important in French. There are quite a few

characteristics which both languages share in terms of their subjunctive usage, but there is no denying that the differences outweigh the similarities.

It would be interesting to assess any putative French influence on the forms and uses of the subjunctive in English. Unfortunately, time limitations prevented me from doing so.

## 6 Corpus investigation

The choice of modals (chiefly *should*) in mandative constructions is a British option. The choice of the indicative is likewise British. Thirdly, Americans are more inclined to use the mandative subjunctive, but a significant number of Britons use it too (Algeo 1992: 605).

The present subjunctive option, though often labelled American, is in fact common English. It is the ‘characteristic’ of standard writing in America (Schlauch 1968: 194).

The modal option, although acceptable to Americans when they happen to hear or read it, is seldom used by them. It is, on the other hand, a frequent choice in both oral and written communications in BrE (Algeo 1992: 616).

The mandative indicative option is approximately as common a choice in BrE as the mandative modal. It is foreign, however, to American grammatical usage (Algeo 1992: 616).

In an elicitation experiment conducted in 1974, Greenbaum assessed the frequency and acceptability of the three options in mandative constructions. Several hundred students, who attended a history course at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, took part in this experiment. The students were asked to apply a five-point scale to judge the frequency and acceptability of 16 sentences involving mandative constructions. The subjunctive received a frequency rating of 3.74 and an acceptability rating of 4.14. The respective figures for the modal mandative were 2.89 and 3.20 while the mandative indicative scored 2.88 and 2.97. Greenbaum drew the following conclusion: ‘The results show, surprisingly, that the subjunctive is felt to be more frequent than either of the other two options and furthermore that it is regarded as the most acceptable form’ (Greenbaum 1977: 95).

In 1980, Turner carried out another elicitation experiment concerning British options in mandative constructions. The participants were BrE speakers whose average age was 26. The majority were undergraduates at Goldsmith’s College of the University of London. Each participant was given a booklet that contained a total number of 50 sentences. Twenty sentences contained a mandative construction while the rest served as distractors. Of the 20 sentences, 10 were phrased to elicit an active verb and 10 a passive verb. The answers given by the British participants were different in active and passive contexts. In active sentences, the results were as follows: 38% used a modal verb, 38% used an indicative, and 24% used a

subjunctive. In passive contexts, only 29% used a modal and 12 % an indicative; 56% used a subjunctive. The conclusions that Turner (1980: 271-77) arrives at are:

1. The fact that 40% of the 820 responses contained a present subjunctive form is ‘evidence which challenges any claims that the subjunctive is extinct or nearly extinct in Modern (British) usage.’
2. The frequent assertion that present-day British English replaces the subjunctive in mandative constructions with a modal verb such as *should* is wrong; in passive sentences the subjunctive is still the majority choice, and in active sentences the indicative is an equally preferred option to the modal form.

Finally, the differences between British and American preferences in mandative constructions were demonstrated in another elicitation experiment conducted by Johansson in 1979. He presented 7 sentences to 92 British university students and 93 American college students. Four sentences contained a grammatically inappropriate infinitive and three contained a mandative subjunctive. Participants were asked to rate each sentence. The three sentences with mandative subjunctives were rated (on a five-point scale) 4.47 by the Americans and 3.57 by the Britons. It becomes clear that the Americans considered the mandative subjunctive more acceptable than the Britons, though the latter gave the subjunctive a relatively high acceptance.

The conclusion that Johansson draws is that the choice of modals (chiefly *should*) in mandative constructions is a British option and the choice of the indicative is likewise British. Finally, the mandative subjunctive is more characteristic of American use although it is an acceptable option in BrE as well. Another interesting fact that comes out from Johansson’s elicitation test is that the mandative context most favouring an indicative response is as complement to the adjective *essential* (Johansson 1979: 195-215).

Intrigued by Johansson’s findings with regard to the suasive adjective *essential* I decided to carry out a search in the BNC and COCA analyzing three powerful suasive verbs and three powerful suasive adjectives. The verbs chosen for the research were the following: *demand*, *suggest*, and *recommend*, whereas the adjectives were: *fitting*, *appropriate*, and *essential*. The suasive adjective *important*, analysed in 4.3.4, has also been included in the illustrative tables in chapter six. One of the aims of this corpus investigation is to find out more about the raw frequencies and distribution patterns of various mandative constructions

across the two major national varieties, that is, BrE and AmE. It will also try to determine whether suasive verbs favour mandative subjunctives more highly than impersonal adjectives, and whether suasive impersonal adjectives generally favour indicatives more highly than verbs, both in British English and American English.

## **6.1 Limitations of corpus data**

Carrying out research relying on corpus data can have its limitations. One limitation in this study is the fact that the two corpora in question, that is the BNC and COCA, differ considerably in size. Another important limitation is the absence of sociolinguistic information about the people who have produced the data. To make up for this, a demographic perspective has been provided by including elicitation test results from previous works, such as Greenbaum (1974), Turner (1980), and Johansson (1979). On the other hand, we should keep in mind the fact that even elicitation tests suffer from the observer's paradox, (Labov 1972: 180-202), which means that the observation of an experiment is influenced by the presence of the observer.

Finally, the scope of this research is rather limited since the number of suasive verbs and suasive adjectives under investigation is rather small.

## **6.2 Research questions**

The BNC and COCA were analysed to answer the following questions:

- How does the use of the subjunctive in British English compare with its current use in American English?
- In which contexts are the subjunctive and its alternatives used in BrE and Ame?
- Do suasive verbs generally favour madative subjunctives more highly than suasive adjectives in the BNC and COCA?
- Do impersonal suasive adjectives generally favour the mandative indicative more highly than suasive verbs in the BNC and COCA?
- Are corpus based findings supported by data from other sources (e.g. elicitation tests)?

### 6.3 Suasive verbs in the BNC and COCA

I started the BrE investigation with the verb-governed mandative construction *demand that he/she /it...* for which a separate manual search was needed for each pronoun. All in all, there were 36 matches. Twenty-six (26) out of 36 (72.2%) were present subjunctives, 6 out of 36 (16.7%) were modal mandatives with *should*, 4/36 (11.1%) were indicatives, and within the mandative subjunctives 4/36 (11.1%) were passive mandative constructions.

In the COCA corpus, *for demand that he/she it...*, the following results came up: there were 131 occurrences, out of which 115 (87.8%) were mandative subjunctives, 3 (2.3%) modal mandatives, 13 (9.7%) indicative mandatives and within the mandative constructions 18 (13.7%) were passive constructions. It may be important to point out that the mandative subjunctive is the preferred choice both in the BNC and COCA although, as it may be expected, the percentages are much higher in the COCA corpus. The modal mandative and indicative mandative percentages are higher in the BNC. It can be said that the suasive verb *demand* indisputably favours the mandative subjunctive both in the BNC and COCA.

Table 12 BNC and COCA, *demand that he/she it...*

	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Passive construction</b>
<b>BNC</b>	26/36 72.2%	6/36 16.7%	4/36 11.1%	4/36 11.1%
<b>COCA</b>	115/131 87.8%	3/131 2.3%	13/131 9.7%	18/131 13.7%

The following examples are taken from COCA and the BNC:

(291) Since I won't be here for long, you must demand that he *keep* his word.

(COCA)

(292) Openness did not demand that he *tell* her he had suggested it. (BNC)

I continued the investigation in the two corpora, this time along the same pattern, but using a different verb, *recommend*. In table 2, one can see the results from the two corpora for the search: *recommend that he/she it...*

In the BNC it is the indicative mandative which has got the highest percentages, precisely 62.5% whereas in the COCA corpus it is the mandative subjunctive which



dominates the figures with 51.2%. There is a relatively high percentage of passive constructions in the COCA corpus. One characteristic of these passive mandative constructions is the fact that the subject in the dependent *that*-clause is the anticipatory *it*. This is not the case when the subject is the pronoun *he* or *she*. It may be concluded that the suasive verb *recommend*, for some reason, favours the indicative mandative in the BNC and, by a large margin, the mandative subjunctive in COCA.

Table 13 BNC and COCA, *recommend that he/she it...*

	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Passive construction</b>
<b>BNC</b>	2/8 25%	1/8 12.5%	5/8 62.5%	0/8 0%
<b>COCA</b>	20/39 51.2%	3/39 7.7%	5/39 12.8%	11/39 28.2%

The following examples are taken from COCA and the BNC:

- (293) ...and I recommend that he *reads* article 2 of the directive. (BNC)
- (294) ...most physicians are going to recommend that he *get* some kind of treatment.  
(COCA)

The third and last string under investigation in this study was *insist that he/she/it...* Table 3 shows the results for both the BNC and COCA:

Again, in the BNC it is the indicative mandative which stands out as the preferred choice with 56.6% followed by the mandative subjunctive with 20.7% and the modal mandative with 13.2%. Contrary to expectations, the indicative mandative is the first choice in the COCA corpus with 43.6% followed by the mandative subjunctive with 35.2% and the modal indicative with 9.7%. It should be noted again that in the case of indicative mandative it is the anticipatory *it* which seems to play a role in the choice of the type of the subjunctive in the *that*-clause. It must also be pointed out that the verb *insist* can be easily used in non-mandative constructions like, *insist on doing something*, and thus avoid the mandative subjunctive. This fact could possibly explain the low percentage of the mandative subjunctive both in American English and British English, something which COCA and the BNC attest. It

can be stated here that the suasive verb *insist* favours mostly the indicative mandative in both corpora.

Table 14 BNC and COCA, *insist that he/she/it...*

	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Passive construction</b>	<b>Non-distinct cases</b>
<b>BNC</b>	11/53 20.7%	7/53 13.2%	30/53 56.6%	4/53 7.6%	5/53 9.4%
<b>COCA</b>	80/227 35,2%	22/227 9.7%	99/227 43.6%	20/227 8.8%	26/227 11.4%

The following examples are taken from COCA and the BNC:

(295) ...they insist that he *struggle* through eight or ten months of hellish agony.

(COCA)

(296) She ought to insist that he *go away*. (BNC)

In tables 15 and 16 I have presented a summary of the results for the three verbs analysed above, that is, *demand*, *recommend* and *insist*. Table 4 shows the overall results from the BNC corpus while table 5 shows the results from the COCA corpus:

Table 15 BNC, overall results for *demand*, *recommend* and *insist that*

	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Passive construction</b>
<b><i>demand</i></b>	26/36 72.2%	6/36 16.7%	4/36 11.1%	4/36 11.1%
<b><i>recommend</i></b>	2/8 25%	1/8 12.5%	5/8 62.5%	0/8 0%
<b><i>insist</i></b>	11/53 20.7%	7/53 13.2%	30/53 56.6%	4/53 7.6%
<b>Total:</b>	39/97 40.2%	14/97 14.4%	39/97 40.2%	8/97 8.2%

By taking a look at table 15, one may conclude that the overall results in the BNC are as follows: the use of the mandative subjunctive has got the same percentage as that of the indicative mandative. In fact, both are neck and neck with 40.2 per cent. This may be seen as a confirmation of the fact that the use of the indicative mandative is probably the first choice

among BrE speakers when it comes to the use of the subjunctive; the use of the mandative subjunctive is almost equally important, at least for certain verbs, and in the case of the verb *demand* it is surprisingly the preferred choice by a wide margin, 72.3 per cent. According to this small-scale study, the use of the modal mandative is not as widely used as it has generally been claimed, at least in the case of these three verbs which are very important triggers of the subjunctive. 14.4 per cent is not a figure that can be completely ignored, but at the same time it does not seem to be that significant.

It might be important at this stage to point out that there is one limitation to this small-scale research: the examples of *demand* and *recommend*, for the most part, are taken from contexts of formal political language; that is not always the case with the examples of *insist* which very often appear to be typical of informal language.

On the basis of these results, the three powerful suasive verbs investigated in the BNC seem to equally favour the mandative subjunctive and the mandative indicative.

Table 16 COCA, overall results for *demand*, *recommend* and *insist* that

	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Passive construction</b>
<i>demand</i>	115/131 87.8%	3/131 2.3%	13/131 9.7%	18/131 13.7%
<i>recommend</i>	20/39 51.2%	3/39 7.7%	5/39 12.8%	11/39 28.2%
<i>insist</i>	80/227 35.2%	22/227 9.7%	99/227 43.6%	20/227 8.8%
<b>Total:</b>	215/397 54.2%	28/397 7.1%	117/397 29.5%	55/397 13.6%

Table 16 clearly shows that the favourite choice of the subjunctive type in the COCA corpus is that of the mandative subjunctive. Although the scope of this study is very limited, it may be said that the results here confirm the general belief that the mandative subjunctive has no rivals in AmE. Surprisingly, the indicative mandative with 29.5% is not as irrelevant as it has been claimed. The modal mandative is present, but the figures are very insignificant. Analysed separately, one can say that in the case of the verb *demand* the role played by the mandative subjunctive is preponderous, at 87.8 % in the COCA corpus and 72.3% in the BNC. It must be the nature of the verb *demand* which asks for the use of the mandative subjunctive both in American English and British English.

The same can be said about the verb *insist*. It is a verb which by nature asks for the use of the indicative mandative both in the BNC and COCA with 56.6% and 43.6% respectively, both being first choices. Another important factor which determines the choice of the type of the subjunctive, at least in the third person singular, is the subject-pronoun in the *that*-clause. The pronoun *it*, in most cases, is followed by the indicative mandative whereas *he* and *she* are followed by the mandative subjunctive and occasionally the modal subjunctive.

All in all, as far as COCA is concerned, it can be said without a shadow of a doubt that suasive verbs in COCA appear to favour the subjunctive.

## 6.4 Suasive adjectives in the BNC and COCA

In another investigation I searched for the string *it is appropriate that...*, where the adjective *appropriate* was the governing element in the mandative construction. In the BNC there were 37 hits where, surprisingly, 22/37 were modal mandatives, 5/37 mandative subjunctives and 5/37 indicatives. In other words, the modal mandatives were the first choice with 59.4% followed by the mandative subjunctives with 13.5% and thirdly, the indicative mandatives with 13.5% as well. There were another 5 instances of ambiguous cases where there was no way of determining as to whether a subjunctive or an indicative had been used.

Table 17 Results for *it is appropriate that* from the BNC and COCA

Corpora	Mandative Subjunctive	Modal mandative	Indicative mandative
BNC	5/37 13.5%	22/37 59.4%	5/37 13.5%
COCA	9/40 22.5%	7/40 17.5%	14/40 35.5%

In the COCA corpus I found 40 occurrences where 9/40 or (22.5%) were mandative subjunctives, 7/40 or (17.5%) were modal mandatives, and 14/40 or (35.5%) mandative indicatives. There were also another 10 cases which were ambiguous. It was most impressive that there was such a high percentage of mandative indicatives. In conclusion, it can be said that the suasive adjective *appropriate* favours mostly the modal mandative in the BNC and, quite surprisingly, the indicative mandative in COCA. The following examples are taken from the two corpora:

- (297) It is appropriate that the image of beauty *should not be fixed*. (BNC)
- (298) In our present troubled world it is appropriate that the ancient olive tree *returns* to hold a prominent place in its 7000-year history. (COCA)

I must stress at this a stage that I got nearly the same results when I investigated *it is fitting that*; the resemblance in terms of percentages was really striking. In the COCA corpus, the indicative mandative outnumbers both the modal and the indicative mandative. There must be a pattern then in AmE that whenever a mandative construction is governed by an adjective, the mandative indicative has got the highest frequency and hence, the highest percentage in use. In the BNC, the dominant choice was by far the modal mandative with 69.2 per cent. As far as the suasive adjective *fitting* is concerned, it can be stated that it favours mostly the indicative mandative in COCA and the modal mandative in the BNC. Table 18 shows the occurrences and raw percentages of the string *it is fitting that* in the COCA and the BNC corpora:

Table 18 Results for *it is fitting that* from the BNC and COCA

Corpora	Mandative subjunctive	Modal mandative	Indicative mandative	Non-distinct cases
COCA	10/83 12.1%	14/83 16.9%	32/83 38.6%	27/83 32.4%
BNC	1/13 7.7%	9/13 69.2%	1/13 7.7%	2/13 15.4%

The following examples are taken from the BNC and COCA:

- (299) ...it is fitting that this monthly intellectual review *take* the longer view.  
(COCA)
- (300) ...it is fitting that the phrase itself *should never be used* of or by him. (BNC)

In the final search, the adjective *essential* was the trigger of the mandative construction in the final clause. Here, I actually searched for the string *it is essential that*. The following table shows the results from the BNC and COCA:

Table 19 Results for *it is essential that* from the BNC and COCA

Corpora	Mandative subjunctive	Modal mandative	Indicative mandative	Ambiguous cases
BNC	2/16 12.5%	8/16 50%	3/16 18.7%	3/16 18.7%
COCA	139/351 39.6%	7/351 2%	29/351 8.3%	176/351 50.1%

In the BNC, although the occurrence was low with only 16 instances, the modal mandative was the first choice with 50.1 per cent followed by the indicative mandative with 18.7 per cent and the mandative subjunctive with only 12.5 per cent. There was another 18.7 per cent of ambiguous cases.

In the COCA corpus the results were quite different. It was surprising to find out that 50.1 per cent of the instances were made up of ambiguous cases. The mandative subjunctive scored 39.6 per cent followed by the indicative mandative with 8.3 per cent. The modal mandative in the COCA corpus was almost non-existent with only 2 per cent. These findings contradict Johansson's elicitation test according to which the suasive adjective *essential* favours mostly an indicative response. It appears that it does not. In fact, it seems that it favours mostly the modal mandative in BrE and the mandative subjunctive in AmE.

The following illustrations are taken from both COCA and ther BNC:

- (301) Because history is a story about people, it is essential that the reader *come* to know and to empathize with the characters. (COCA)
- (302) It is essential that alternative accommodation *should be* very varied in type...(BNC)

Table 20 shows the overall BNC results of the search for the string *it is appropriate/fitting/essential/important that*:

Table 20 Overall BNC results of the search for the string *it is appropriate/fitting/essential/important that*

<b>Corpus BNC</b>	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Ambiguous cases</b>
<i>appropriate</i>	5/37 13.5%	22/37 59.4%	5/37 13.5%	5/37 13.5%
<i>fitting</i>	10/83 12.1%	14/83 16.8%	32/83 38.6%	27/83 32.4%
<i>essential</i>	2/16 12.5%	8/16 50%	3/16 8.7%	3/16 8.7%
<i>important</i>	32/648 4.9%	130/648 20.1%	272/648 42%	214/648 33%
<b>Total</b>	49/784 6.3%	174/784 22.2%	312/784 39.8%	249/784 31.7%

The overall results from Table 20 show that, in BrE, whenever the trigger of a mandative construction is an adjective, then, the indicative mandative is in the lead over the other alternatives. This tendency is also shown when the trigger *important* is analysed separately. The overall percentage for the four adjective-triggers is 39.8 per cent, followed by the modal mandative with 22.3 per cent, and the mandative subjunctive with an insignificant 6.3 per cent. The percentage of the ambiguous cases is significantly high, 31.7 per cent. This confirms the generally accepted belief that the indicative is the most favoured choice in BrE when it comes to using mandative constructions. On the basis of these results, it can be said that suasive adjectives in the BNC appear to favour mostly the indicative mandative.

Table 21 shows the overall COCA results of the search for the string *it is appropriate/fitting/essential that*:

Table 21 Overall COCA results of the search for the string *it is appropriate/fitting/essential that*

<b>Corpus COCA</b>	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>	<b>Ambiguous cases</b>
<i>appropriate</i>	9/40 22.5%	7/40 17.5%	14/40 35.5%	10/40 25%
<i>fitting</i>	10/83 12.1%	14/83 16.9%	32/83 38.6%	27/83 32.4%
<i>essential</i>	139/351 39.6%	7/351 2%	29/351 8.3%	176/351 50.1%
<b>Total</b>	158/474 33.4%	28/474 5.9%	75/474 15.8%	213/474 44.9%

Again, table 21, confirms the expected results of the search in the COCA corpus when adjectives are used as triggers for mandative constructions. The mandative subjunctive is the preferred choice with 33.4 per cent; the indicative mandative comes second with 15.8 per cent and finally the modal mandative comes third with a lowly 5.9 per cent. The percentage of the non-distinct cases is 44.9 per cent, a very high percentage indeed. On the basis of the COCA results, it can be said that suasive adjectives in this corpus seem to favour mostly the mandative subjunctive.

In Table 22, the total number of instances, frequencies and percentages have been added up for all the suasive verbs and adjectives that are investigated in this study. The results from the BNC show that the indicative mandative is the preferred choice in BrE while the results from the COCA corpus confirm once again that the mandative subjunctive is favoured mostly in AmE.

Table 22 Overall results for the suasive verbs and adjectives investigated in the BNC and COCA

<b>Corpora</b>	<b>Mandative subjunctive</b>	<b>Modal mandative</b>	<b>Indicative mandative</b>
<b>BNC</b>	88/881 9.9%	188/881 21.3%	351/881 39.8%
<b>COCA</b>	373/871 42.7%	56/871 6.4%	192/871 22.0

The findings of this small-scale study confirm Algeo's view that Americans are more inclined to use the mandative subjunctive and that the other two subjunctive alternatives are a British option. The findings contradict Algeo's view that the indicative mandative is foreign to



American grammatical usage. It appears that it is not. Twenty-two per cent is a percentage that must be taken into account.

## 7 Conclusion

The subjunctive continues to be a source of dispute among grammarians and scholars while it appears that its historical role in English has been inconsistent. This could explain why some linguists have talked about the death throes of the subjunctive, while others have considered its usage quaint, formal and pretentious. The subjunctive ‘typically occurs in formal English Nichols (1987: 140). There is no doubt at all that the inflectional subjunctive has gone through a steady decline in the history of the English language.

After the gradual loss of the distinct verbal inflections in late OE/early ME, there were still other means of expressing modality, uncertainty hypothesis, wishes and counter-factive statements besides the subjunctive, which most importantly survives to the present day. ‘The other means’ consist of the modal auxiliaries, modal adjectives and adverbs. It goes without saying that the long-term trend has been towards analytic/periphrastic constructions, and away from synthetic/inflectional constructions. Also, bearing in mind a general tendency towards grammaticalization, it can be said that the decline of the subjunctive is only one part of a trend that has affected the whole linguistic system.

As noted by Rissanen (1999: 228), ‘The loss of distinctive endings was probably the main reason for the replacement of the subjunctive forms by auxiliary periphrasis. It was the loss of inflections and the appearance of the periphrastic forms which accounted for the decline of the subjunctive. Due to historical change, mood has been all but eliminated from the inflectional system of English whereas the past subjunctive has been confined to 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> person singular *were*, which is very often replaced by the indicative form *was*. The main mood system in modern English is analytic rather than inflectional.’ Lamberts (1972: 235) points out, ‘In Old English itself, the number of auxiliaries had increased to the point where writers had the option of using a subjunctive inflectional form or a modal auxiliary. It is the modal auxiliaries and the indicative which seem to have taken over some of the functions of the subjunctive in English today.’

As a result, some of those functions have been reduced in modern English. The subjunctive was frequently used in reported speech both in Old English and Middle English, but that function appears to have become extinct in modern English.

The past subjunctive used to be employed in principal clauses to express hypothesis. That does not happen any longer in modern English.

Also, the present subjunctive was frequently used both in Old English and Middle English to express wish or exhortation; today it is only used in certain set expressions which are regarded as archaic or old-fashioned. *God save the queen, Be that as it may, Heaven forbid*, et cetera, fall into this category (Quirk et al. 1985: 157-158).

The present subjunctive continues to be used in subordinate clauses of condition, concession and negative purpose where it is usually introduced *by lest* or *for fear that*, but it should be noted that there it is rather formal.

Interestingly, the present subjunctive, just like in Old English and Middle English, continues to be used in mandative contexts, precisely in an object clause introduced by the conjunction *that*; in fact, the mandative subjunctive appears to be the most productive form in modern English.

It has been claimed that the mandative subjunctive used to be and still is more commonly used in American English than in British English, but it is also believed to be reestablishing itself in British English, presumably due to the American influence (Quirk 1985: 157).

In modern English, the subjunctive and its alternatives are used in mandative contexts. As it was shown from the results of the corpus investigation in this study the mandative subjunctive is, by far, the most frequently chosen alternative in American English, whereas British English seems to prefer the mandative indicative. The modal mandative was found to be another widely attested alternative in British English. On the basis of the corpus investigation, it is clear that the mandative indicative is not as foreign to American English usage as it has been claimed. The results show that 22 per cent of Americans choose it as an alternative to the mandative subjunctive. These findings contradict Algeo's statement that the indicative is foreign to AmE usage (1992: 616).

Finally, the modal option appears to be used very rarely in AmE, which coincides with the view that ‘it is lacking or very rare in American English’ (Algeo 1992: 613).

All in all, the findings in this study confirm the results of the elicitation tests carried out by Greenbaum (1977: 95), Turner (1980: 271-77), and Johansson (1979: 195-215).

Again, on the basis of the corpus investigation conducted in this study, it seems that *suasive* verbs in BrE generally favour mandative subjunctives more highly than adjectives do. In percentage terms, *suasive* verbs trigger the mandative subjunctive at a raw frequency rate of 40.2 per cent, while adjectives produce the lowly rate of only 6.3 per cent. The same is true about AmE. *Suasive* verbs appear to favour the subjunctive more highly than the *suasive* adjectives. The verbs trigger the subjunctive in 54.2 per cent of the cases, whereas the adjectives stop at 33.4 per cent.

Based on the results of the corpus investigation in the BNC, it appears that *suasive* adjectives and *suasive* verbs favour the mandative indicative almost equally in BrE. The respective percentage figures are 39.8 for the adjectives and 40.2 for the verbs. These findings seem to confirm the view that the indicative is the first option in BrE usage. In COCA, *suasive* adjectives do not seem to favour the mandative indicative more highly than the verbs do. In fact, *suasive* adjectives trigger the indicative at a frequency rate of 15.8 per cent, whereas *suasive* verbs trigger the indicative at a rate of 29.5 per cent. It may be worth noting here that both *suasive* adjectives and *suasive* verbs trigger the mandative subjunctive more frequently than do the other two alternatives.

This study presents some limitations because the search was limited to a set of triggering *suasive* verbs and adjectives and the ambiguous instances were not included in the statistics. A similar study on a larger scale, with triggering *suasive* nouns entering the equation, would be worth carrying out.

Finally, it is true that the use of the subjunctive in modern English is limited, but at the same time it is very much alive, especially in American English. It seems that the use of the subjunctive, particularly in mandative contexts, will continue to stand the test of time and prove everyone that has predicted its extinction wrong.

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